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DOCTRINAL PROGRESS AND ITS LAWS

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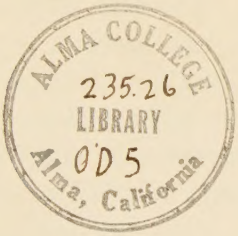
DOCTRINAL PROGRESS AND ITS LAWS

AN ESSAY ON THE CAUSES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

PRESENTED TO THE THEOLOGICAL FACULTY OF ST. PATRICK'S COLLEGE, MAYNOOTH, AS A THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR

BY

REV. EUGENE O'DOHERTY



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PREFACE

THE object of a History of Dogmas is to trace the course of the various doctrines and to describe the phases of their development. Its primary aim is, therefore, to give the descriptive laws of doctrinal progress. But one may still ask what were the causes which led to this progress, and what causal laws govern it? The present Essay is an attempt to answer these questions. There is no need to state that in a small volume an adequate treatment of the problem cannot be expected. To do full justice to the subject a lifetime of labour would be insufficient. Each chapter of this Essay might easily be made the subject of a separate work. But it seemed better to attempt a general treatment, even though certain important points would necessarily be omitted or touched upon only cursorily, because the wider the field of investigation the easier it is to see the general causal laws which are in the background. The same causal laws are in operation in every century. In details these laws may be somewhat modified by changing circumstances, but there is substantial identity throughout.

Examining the various causes which led to the development of doctrine, history shows that Exegesis, philosophy,

the study of the Fathers, even the physical sciences, have contributed in varying degrees. Again, the liturgy and the practice of the Church have occasionally stimulated progress. Why were these means called into operation? The reason is twofold : (1) to defend the revealed truths, and (2) to help in elucidating them. And why has development occurred only at intervals? The reason is plain. Augustine answers—because only at intervals heretics arise to attack the doctrines. Throughout the course of history, heresy has been what Augustine calls the gymnasium for the exercise of doctrine. The spirit of inquiry is not by any means confined to modern times; scarcely a century passed since the foundation of the Church in which a curb had not to be put on the vagaries of rationalism. Heresies, from whatever cause they may have arisen, usually occasion a development of doctrine. The opposition focusses attention on a particular truth; the power of the Church, hitherto latent in this matter, is called upon to defend the orthodox position; Catholic scholars are driven to make a careful study of the disputed point, as well as of the arguments on which the opposite opinion is based. The existence of heresy implies that there is a difficulty somewhere. Catholic scholars must overcome that difficulty. In doing so, new aspects of doctrine are laid bare, new implications discovered, new arguments evolved to meet the heretical objections. What had been accepted without demur in one age may be denied in the next. Arguments which were considered conclusive in one

generation may carry no conviction in another. Hence the process must go on. There will always be heresies, and there will always be doctrinal development. Revelation, being immutable, must be eternally capable of satisfying the human mind in every age, and the ultimate causal law of doctrinal development will, therefore, be the need of showing the harmony of Catholic doctrine with contemporary conditions.

E. O'D.

Dunboyne Establishment,
Maynooth College, April, 1924.

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CHAPTER I

Immutable Revelation

THE existence of development in doctrine is a fact which is now universally admitted by Catholic theologians. The full recognition of this fact, as well as the proper explanation of it, is due to the violent attacks of non-Catholics on the Church. In general, these attacks may be considered as the expressions of two distinct schools of thought: one erring by excess, the other by defect; one school accusing the Church of being the enemy of all progress; of holding views which science has proved false; of teaching doctrines which are utterly incapable of convincing the educated minds of to-day; in a word, of being an institution which may have benefited humanity in times past, but which is now useless and effete: the other school loudly proclaiming that the Church has corrupted the teaching of Christ; that her doctrines are not the doctrines of the Gospel, but the effusions of mediæval theologians, whose object was not to enlighten men, but to keep them in a state of absolute ignorance, and thus restrain them from examining the false foundation on which the Church was built.

The attacks on the Church may not be so violent to-day as they were some years ago. This does not, however, detract from the danger to which they give rise. What they lose in violence they gain in insidiousness. The methods of the early Reformers have merely

changed; they have not ceased, and in their modern garb they constitute a more serious menace to the faithful than did the more straightforward methods of the preceding centuries.

In the early years of Christianity we find that religion made the object of infidel jest and sneer. No particular doctrine was singled out; the attack was made rather upon Christianity as a practical religion. As time went on and the Church became systematically organised, certain of her beliefs were made the objects of aggression. At present adversaries of the Church have taken up a line of attack more radical and more thorough than any hitherto adopted. They scarcely trouble to find fault with any one particular doctrine, but attempt to discredit all by denying the very possibility of a revealed religion, and, in fact, of anything supernatural.

There were, however, those who endeavoured to explain the Catholic dogmas in terms of this current rationalistic philosophy, for this is the unhappy position of the Modernists. The attempt ended in failure, as might be expected, seeing that the principles which they tried to unite were mutually opposed. It may be said, of course, that pagan philosophy had been in the past pressed into the service of religion, and why could not the same be done again? If St. Thomas christianised Aristotelianism there should be no difficulty in establishing amicable relations between modern speculations and the doctrines of the Church. But it must be remembered that though both Platonism and Aristotelianism are pagan philosophies they are not exactly godless. They are pagan in the sense that their founders did not know the God of Christianity, but they did not therefore deny either His existence or His attributes. Present-day philosophy is more radically pagan. It positively excludes the very fundamentals of

the Christian religion, and that not merely by accident, but by design. One may show that modern Rationalism is constructed on false hypotheses, or that it fails to offer satisfactory explanations of the facts of experience, but one may hardly expect that its concepts can be safely used in the elucidation of the Christian truths. At any rate, the methods adopted by the Modernists to do so were disastrous to the revealed truths. Modernists pretended to retain the doctrines of the Church, but in reality they denied them. All that was retained was the external expression of these doctrines. But the terminology was used to cover concepts which were altogether foreign to the traditional teaching. Words, such as religion, revelation, dogma, conscience, etc., received a meaning completely different from that hitherto accepted in the Church. The misunderstandings which were the inevitable result of such a mode of action necessitate a brief treatment of revelation as understood by the Catholic Church, and of the precise manner in which the doctrines of the Church are progressive.

The word "revelation" is used in two senses by theologians. It is applied to the action of God in manifesting truths to us whether those truths are beyond the natural order or not. Or it may be employed to signify those truths themselves. Again, revelation may take place directly or indirectly—that is, God may manifest natural or supernatural truths either immediately or by the instrumentality of a human being. In the Old Testament we find examples of both. God directly revealed to Adam the future redemption of man.[1] He said to Abram: "In thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed."[2]—thereby revealing that the future

[1] *Gen.* iii, 15.
[2] *Gen.* xii, 3.

Messiah was to descend from Abram. Similarly, direct revelations were made to Isaac,[3] to Jacob,[4] to Moses,[5] etc. The revelation to the human race made through the Prophets was indirect. God spoke to the Prophets not for their personal benefit, but for the good of humanity. The Prophets recognised that they were instruments of the Divine Will. They communicated the message which was entrusted to them to deliver. In the New Testament period, God, in the person of Our Divine Lord, perfected the revelation of the old dispensation, and this new revelation was completed by the Apostles.

The revelation made by Christ is our chief concern. It constitutes the deposit of which St. Paul speaks.[6] This body of truths has been committed to the guardianship of the Church, and may not be added to or changed in any way. " The doctrine of faith which God has revealed is not to be proposed to the human intellect to be evolved and perfected as if it were a principle of philosophy. It is a divine deposit, handed over to the Spouse of Christ to be guarded faithfully and declared infallibly."[7]

The fact that God has revealed a certain truth does not necessarily imply that that truth is beyond the natural powers of reason to discover. But even when it transcends the capabilities of reason altogether, it can never be said to be opposed to reason. There are many revealed truths which man is unable to comprehend. The finite simply cannot comprehend the infinite. But man can understand the most transcendent truths at least to this extent, that his intellect can appreciate the harmony existing between the Divine Reason and his

[3]*Gen.* xxvi, 24.
[4]*Gen.* xxxv, 11.
[5]*Exodus* iii, 14.
[6]I *Tim.* vi, 20. [7]Conc. Vatican (1870) *De Fide*, Can. 4 Cavallera, *Thesaurus Doctrinæ*, *n.* 210.

own. The Reformers exaggerated the supernatural element in revelation to such an extent as to minimise unduly the power of the intellect. They pretended to be able to judge genuine revelation not by its reasonableness, nor by the fact that it was guaranteed by tradition, but by its savour; that is, by its appeal to their appetitive faculties. They refused also to acknowledge tradition as a source of revelation, and they definitely excluded the authority of the Church. The revelation made by God became indeterminate, something analogous to the Aristotelian "matter." It received "form" when each one tasted it and interpreted it in his own way. The person of first importance in revelation was, therefore, not God, but the individual man.

The fundamental principle in the system of Luther was the doctrine of private judgment. The result is that in practice each man creates his own revelation. He can choose the doctrines which suit his temperament and leave untouched those which do not please him. The ultimate criterion of revelation is contained in each man, not in his intellect, but in his will, or his feelings, or his desires. The activity of reason is very much curtailed, but individualism is proportionately strengthened. Luther himself gave a definite example of this individualism when he denied those portions of Scripture which were not in accord with his preconceived ideas. If one may deny a part of what purports to be revelation, why should one be restricted to the denial of a part merely? Seeing that the individual is supreme, why not deny the whole content of so-called revelation if it is not in harmony with one's feelings? This is exactly the trend of events in the later Reformation period. Luther lowered the power of the intellect, but he elevated the status of the individual. Rationalists

upheld the Lutheran individualism, but, being more logical, they defended the supremacy of the cognitive faculties in man. Luther would say that one can know true revelation by its taste; that is, by its relation to the appetitive faculties; Rationalists asserted that whatever be the nature of the truth proposed, it must be such as reason can guarantee, the intellect being the supreme arbiter. The similarity between Lutheranism and Rationalism is so close as to point to a causal connection. The principle of private judgment opened the way for modern philosophy to deny not only revelation as we understand it, but the whole supernatural order. With Luther the objectivity of revelation lessened; with Rationalism it disappears altogether and becomes simply a state of consciousness.

Rationalism, for instance, either denies absolutely the existence of anything supernatural or denies that we can know anything about the supernatural world, if it exists. In its most extreme form, Rationalism results in the apotheosis of creative evolution. This creative evolution rules the universe. Its essence is identical with the essence of God. Revelation is nothing more than the progressive evolution of our knowledge and of our natural religious sense. Christianity is a stage in the evolution of religious experience, but not the final or the most perfect stage. The theories of Modernists may not be so thorough-going as that just described; nevertheless some disciples of Modernism approach it very closely. Sabatier considers revelation as the consciousness acquired by man of his relations with God. The object of revelation, he says, can only be God Himself—the feeling of His presence in us, exciting our soul to the life of justice and love.[8] A mitigated form of Rationalism

[8] *Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion*, I ch. II.

held in the preceding generation by Hermes and Guenther admitted the fact of Divine Revelation, but considered all truths so revealed capable of being demonstrated by philosophical proofs.[9]

Against such views as these, the Church asserts that there has been a real historical revelation of truths, and of the truths thus revealed she is the guardian. From time to time she gives infallible interpretations of articles contained in the sacred deposit. She defines in what precise sense a particular doctrine is to be understood. Such a definition is called a dogma. It bears the same relation to the revealed mystery that an assertion bears to the object spoken of.[10] It is a proposition made by the authority in the Church to be accepted by all the faithful. A dogma is, therefore, determined by an external power, and is not the expression of the Christian experience.[11] The sense of the revealed truth thus defined remains permanently incapable of change. In this sense dogma is said to be immutable.

This immutability is not a new attribute applied to dogma on account of Modernist or other errors. The unchangeable nature of the teaching of Christ is made very clear in the New Testament, while it is so much emphasised in the writings of the Fathers that one wonders how they ever thought of anything like doctrinal development.

The Scriptures tell us that Christ preached only one Gospel, and that He chose a number of His followers and trained them for the express purpose of communi-

[9]The condemnation of these false theories is to be found in the decrees of the Vatican Council, *De Fide*, and in the Encyclical "*Pascendi Gregis*," and the decree "*Lamentabili*." Cavallera. *Thes. Doct.*, Nos. 150, 152, 24b, 211.

[10]Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione*, I, p. 183.

[11]*Op. cit.*, p. 184.

cating this teaching to the world. They were to continue the work which He had begun. In His last solemn discourse with His Apostles, He outlined for them their course of action. " Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptising them . . ., and teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you."[12] The Apostles were not to teach what might or should be Christ's teaching; their duty was to give to men the precise doctrines which they had received. And they were convinced that these doctrines were immutable. No other Gospel was to be admitted, no matter from what source it came; in fact, even if they themselves preached a different Gospel, they were not to be believed. " Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema. And as we said before, so now I say again. If anyone preach to you a gospel besides that which you have received, let him be anathema."[13] The doctrines of Christ are not to be adulterated with philosophical speculations, but they are to be diligently guarded and handed on just as they were received. Addressing his fellow-labourer Timothy, Saint Paul says : " Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words and oppositions of knowledge falsely so-called."[14] And lest there might be any possibility of mistake, Christ promised to send the Apostles the Holy Ghost to be with them when He Himself was absent. The Holy Ghost will direct their labours and preserve them in the truth. " I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete that He may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth."[15] " The Holy Ghost

[12] *Matt.*, 28.19, 20, *cf. Mark*, 16.15, 16.
[13] St. Paul, *Ep. ad Galat*, 1-8, 9.
[14] I *Tim.* 6, 20, *cf.* II *Tim*, 1.13, 14.
[15] *John* 14, 16-17.

. . . will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind whatsoever I have said to you."[16]

The Apostles, therefore, clearly recognised that there was one Gospel, and only one. There was to be no compromise with any other teaching. It is either the exact doctrines of Christ or nothing, for " he that is not with me, is against me."[17] And this same Gospel is eternal. It is the perfection of all that has gone before, and will never be changed nor revoked. It is the last word.[18]

The Scriptures testify to the immutable character of the revealed doctrines. It remains to be seen whether they were received in this way by the Fathers. The very fact that they consider tradition as the real test of orthodoxy sufficiently indicates their attitude. In cases of heresy the invariable criterion was whether this doctrine had been handed down ; whether it was Apostolic. And not only in matters of belief, but in practice the same criterion was employed. St. Stephen condemned the practice of re-baptising those who had been baptised by heretics on the ground that such a mode of action was an innovation and contrary to the apostolic tradition.[19] St. Vincent of Lerins who in the early portion of the fifth century promulgated the proper theory of doctrinal development, is equally strong on the fixity of the Catholic teaching. " We are Catholics," he says, " when we confess this one true faith which the Church confesses throughout the world; we must hold fast to the sense which was made clear by our saintly

[16] *John* 14.26.
[17] *Matt.* 12.30.
[18] *Heb.* 1.1.
[19] Migne, P.L. III, col. 1128. The first edition of Migne is used throughout—Latin Fathers (1844–55), Greek Fathers 1857-66).

elders and fathers."[20] St. Vincent is particularly important as showing exactly what was the contemporary theory regarding the revealed doctrines, and the practice of the Church in maintaining their immutability. Commenting on the charge given by St. Paul to Timothy,[21] St. Vincent says : " What is the deposit? It is something which is credited to you, not an invention of your own; it is that which you have received, and not the result of your ideas; it is not a matter of intellect, but a matter of doctrine, and not of private inspiration, but of public tradition; it is something of which you are not the author, but the guardian."[22] In St. Vincent's time, therefore, the deposit of faith was considered to be unchangeable. Ecclesiastical superiors were merely to guard it safely and hand it on. As showing how the Church realised and fulfilled that duty, the same author gives eloquent testimony.[23] " The Church of Christ, the careful and wise guardian of the dogmas entrusted to her care, admits no variations ; she never subtracts (from the doctrines), nor does she add (to them); she does not delete the necessary, or introduce the superfluous . . . but when handing on the old (teaching), she uses all her powers to elucidate and polish what was before obscure or unfinished, to consolidate and strengthen what was already express and clear, and to guard what was certain and defined."

[20] *Commonitorium* chap. 2, P.L. 50.
[21] I *Tim.* vi, 20.
[22] *Commonit.* chap. 22.
[23] *Commonit.* chap. 24.

CHAPTER II

Progressive Doctrine

SINCE the deposit of faith must be so zealously guarded, where is the room for evolution or progress? If the identical doctrines are to be handed on without addition, there does not seem to be any possibility of development. Notwithstanding the apparent contradiction, it is the Catholic teaching that there has been progress in doctrinal matters. Anyone who takes the trouble of examining the *Enchiridion* of Denzinger, or the *Thesaurus Doctrinæ* of Cavallera, will see that there are many truths defined by the Church which cannot be found explicitly in the Apostles' Creed. And, furthermore, it is the teaching of the Church that this progress in no way affects the immutability of the divine deposit.[1]

One may imagine this progress occurring in two ways, quantitatively or qualitatively. For example, in the period of the Old Law, we have an instance of quantitative progress. The doctrines increased by means of new revelations. Prior to Moses, the articles of faith are the existence of God and His Omnipotence. To Moses is revealed the Simplicity of God.[2] Then the New Law perfects the preceding revelation by presenting doctrines which either were altogether absent from the

[1]Cavallera, *Thesaurus Doct. Cath.* nn. 210, 217, pp. 123, 126.
[2]*Exod.* III, 14.

Old Law, *e.g.*, the doctrine of the Trinity, or were contained therein only implicitly, *e.g.*, the doctrine of the Atonement.

Under the New Dispensation, the deposit of revelation was completed at the death of the Apostles. There is, therefore, no place for quantitative development. The completion of revelation in the Christian period is clearly shown in the Epistle to the Hebrews where the fragmentary character of the revelations of the prophets is contrasted with the single revelation made by the Son.[3] The period of the Gospel is the final epoch in the religious history of the world. Christ came to perfect the revelations made by the prophets. He inaugurated a religious system embracing every aspect of man's relations with God, and he intended that system to be adopted by all men and for all time. While quantitative development is compatible with the immutability of an individual doctrine, it cannot take place when the revealed deposit is complete; that is to say, any addition to the body of revealed truths promulgated by the Apostles is impossible.

Quantitative development being thus ruled out, some scheme of qualitative progress is essential to explain the growth of the doctrines of the Church. According to many writers, this qualitative development produces the same result as would be had from additional revelations —something is present which was not there before, either explicitly or implicitly. But this qualitative development may be taken in another sense, that is, as affecting primarily not the doctrines themselves, but our

[3] *Heb.* i. 1-2: *vid.*, also *ibid* viii, 7-13; xii, 27-28; vii, 11 *et sqq.* When it is said that revelation is complete, only public and official revelation is understood. As to private revelations, they may take place in the Christian period, as they did before Christ. But there will be no further revelation of such a nature as to make additions to the deposit of faith left to the Apostles and handed on by them to the Church.

understanding of the doctrines. The doctrines were there from the beginning, but their whole content was not grasped immediately. Much time was required before they were adequately appreciated. The first understanding of them was true as far as it went, but it was imperfect. By degrees new light was thrown on them, and aspects hitherto concealed were brought into prominence. With this clear vision of the implications of any particular dogma there came also a certain development of the dogmatic concept itself. It was not a change from one concept to another, but the old concept became fuller, more orderly, and more precise. Just as a rise of false opinions necessitated greater accuracy of expression on the part of the defenders of the truth, so this accuracy of expression in turn resulted in a more precise conception of the dogma assailed.[4]

As thus explained, development of doctrine is both legitimate and necessary. Neither the unity of dogma nor its immutability is imperilled. The truths of faith are the same before the process commenced and at any point in its course. Take, for instance, the doctrine of the Incarnation. The kernel of the doctrine is simply "God became man." If an ordinary Catholic peasant is asked what he means by the Incarnation, he will reply by saying that he means that God became man. He is not troubled by any metaphysical speculations or abstractions, but he is certain about the fact. Now, if the same question is put to a theologian he will tell you that the Incarnation is the assumption of human nature by the Second Person of the Trinity, who is at once human and divine, each nature in that Person being complete, so that side by side with the divinity there is present a real human body and a soul. The peasant and the theologian

[4]Vid. Batiffol, *L'Eucharistie*, pp. 500, 501.

believe exactly the same thing, but the latter has a clearer understanding of the doctrine. His concept of the Incarnation is more perfect than that of his uneducated fellow-Catholic; yet all his additional knowledge is contained implicitly in the simple statement, "God became man."

A scheme of development such as has been outlined adequately explains the growth of doctrine which is manifest in the Church. Yet it is rejected by Modernists and by most Protestants as useless. Dr. Gore, for example, says, "it must be remembered that no theory of doctrinal development is of any assistance to the Roman position which does not cover an actual increase in positive revelation. Early Christians did not know anything of, *e.g.*, the Immaculate Conception of Mary."[5] Dr. Gore would, therefore, demand some kind of quantitative development. But the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception can be adequately explained without having recourse to any new revelation. The fact that this dogma was not formulated in the early Church is no argument against it. It is true that the doctrine was defined only in 1854, but from the beginning of Christianity it was implied in another belief. It is the direct conclusion from the decree of Ephesus on the Divine Maternity. Furthermore, tradition, which is also one of the sources of revelation, gives us principles from which the doctrine logically follows.[6]

Dr. Gore would regard with more favour a theory of development such as that proposed by Modernists. According to them, Revelation is not so much the act of God in giving, as the act of man in receiving. There

[5] *Bampton Lectures*, 1891, p. 253.

[6] A fuller discussion on this doctrine is given later—pp. 88 *et sqq.*

is, as it were, no common fund which is to be the fixed basis of man's belief, but every man has his own. This revelation may change, and has changed according to the circumstances of time, place, and individual. There is in it neither permanence nor stability, and every development is not an addition to the original, but a new entity constructed from the ruins of the old. The content of revelation is, therefore, continually increasing according to the laws of organic development, and not simply disclosing its hidden significance.

The philosophy of Bain and Spencer may justly be regarded as one of the greatest supports of the Modernist movement. Loisy, for example, sets out with the principle that life is merely a continual adaptation to external conditions.[7] This principle he considers universally applicable. Christianity, since it has lived for nearly two thousand years, must, therefore, come within its scope.[8] Hence Christianity must have changed substantially during the course of its existence.[9] Just as man's body became little by little more perfect and more complex, so also did the mind. Finally man became conscious of God and invented dogmas to express his relations to the Deity.[10] These so-called dogmas have not, however, any objective truth. They truly express the religious feeling of the individual at the time, but at another time or in other circumstances they would disappear to make room for new dogmas. At best they have only a practical value. They are useful for regulating our conduct. Le Roy, for example,[11]

[7]Loisy, *L'Évangile et l'Église*, p. 112; Paris, 1902. La vie est un mouvement et un effort continuels d'adaptation á des conditions perpetuellement variables et nouvelles.

[8]Le christianisme n'a pas échappé á cette loi. l.c.

[9]*L'Évangile et l'Église*, p. 110.

[10]Loisy, *Autour d'un petit livre*, p. 195; Paris, 1903.

[11]In article "*Qu'est ce qu'un dogme*" in La Quinzaine, 16 April,1905.

says : " The dogma of the Real Presence means that one ought to have before the consecrated host the same attitude which one would have before Jesus become visible."[12] It is quite clear from this that he denies anything objective in the dogma of the Real Presence. Not only that, but he makes the act of faith to be nothing more than an act of the will, and even then internal assent is not demanded—simply one must deport oneself in exterior conformity to the teaching of the Church.[13]

Having such ideas of revelation and dogma, it is not difficult for Modernists to expound their theory of organic development. Indeed it is the only theory which they could logically follow. From the Catholic standpoint, however, the whole system is subversive of traditional teaching. There is no longer unity of belief, because each one is to be governed by his own religious sense. There is no immutability of revelation; in fact, there is no revelation at all in the orthodox sense of the word. And, finally, the authority of the Church is set at naught. Instead of proposing truths to the faithful, her business now is to incorporate, and go on incorporating certain of these expressions of the religious sense of the community.

Yet, though the logical conclusion of Modernism means the destruction of the very foundations of revelation, Modernists themselves seem to have laboured under the impression that their theories gave rise to no substantial change in the revealed teaching. Throughout their treatises much emphasis is laid on the continuity of doctrine. The doctrines of the Church to-day, they

[12]" Le dogme de la présence réelle veut dire qu'il faut avoir en face de l'hostie consacrée une attitude identique á celle qu'on aurait en face de Jésus devenu visible." *loc. cit.*

[13]V. Encycl. *Pascendi,* Prop. 25.

say, are far different from those preached by the Apostles; yet the change occurred so gradually as to be often imperceptible. Those of a particular period are almost indistinguishable from those of the period immediately preceding and those of that immediately following.[14]

As a logical sequence, they must show that their theories uphold the continuity which is found throughout the history of dogmas. Such a mode of action is useful to them for two reasons; firstly, it enables their conclusions to attain greater publicity before being authoritatively condemned, and secondly, it makes their conclusions much more difficult to disprove effectively. To establish this continuity, they seem to have selected Cardinal Newman as being the most suitable on whom to father their heretical teaching. Writing in the " Hibbert Journal " of January, 1908 (p. 243), Tyrrell says : " The solidarity of Newmanism with Modernism cannot be denied. Newman might have shuddered at his progeny, but it is none the less his."[15] The motive of such an accusation can scarcely be doubted. But no unbiassed reader of Newman's works would ever classify him as a Modernist. It is true that there are passages which could be interpreted in a heterodox sense, as, *e.g.*, when he says that in demonstrating the Catholic Religion he prefers to rely on an accumulation of various probabilities.[16] If this is taken literally and pushed to its logical conclusion, it might be shown that he held that faith was ultimately based on probability, which is a condemned proposition.[17] But Newman means by probability what theologians call moral certainty—

[14]Loisy, *L'Évangile et l'Église*, p. 110 *et sqq.*
[15]Lépicier, *De Stab et Prog. Dogmatum*, p. 90, n. 4.
[16]*Grammar of Assent*, London, 1892; pp. 411, 412.
[17]*Lamentabili*, Prop. 25. Assensus fidei ultimo innititur in congerie probabilitatum.

because in the same place he says : " It is more congenial to my own judgment to attempt to prove Christianity in the same informal way in which I can prove for certain that I have been born into this world, and that I shall die out of it." Furthermore, his idea of Revelation and revealed religion is altogether opposed to the Modernist conceptions. He writes : " The very idea of Christianity . . . is . . . a ' Revelatio revelata ' ; it is a definite message from God to man distinctly conveyed by his chosen instruments, and . . . therefore to be positively acknowledged, embraced, and maintained as true, on the ground of its being divine, not as true on intrinsic grounds, not as probably true, or partially true, but as absolutely certain knowledge, certain in a sense in which nothing else can be certain, because it comes from Him who can neither deceive nor be deceived."[18]

Newman is therefore perfectly orthodox in his conception of revelation. In regard to doctrinal development he is open to more criticism from the standpoint of Catholic theology. Throughout his "Essay" he attributes too much importance to the opinions of Bishop Butler. Most of the analogies which the Cardinal uses to illustrate the progress of dogma are taken from Butler's work. Taken in themselves, most of these comparisons are of the greatest help in showing the vitality of the Catholic religion, but one must never forget that they are only analogies. Though, no doubt, Newman would condemn the conclusions of Modernists, there does seem to be at least an apparent basis for the charge that he was the inaugurator of the new movement. If, as Newman seems to think, dogma is a vital entity, and is governed by the ordinary laws of development experienced in physical organisms, then there must be a quantitative change

[18] *Grammar of Assent*, 386, 387.

somewhere in the process. If this latter is true, then, to use again the words of Tyrrell, " the solidarity of Newmanism and Modernism cannot be denied."

The inference is, however, altogether false. Newman's idea of development can easily be separated from the illustrations which he uses to show his meaning. His " Essay on Development " makes it quite clear that he recognised the immutability of doctrine as well as its progress. His analogy of physical growth was used merely as an analogy, and was never intended to be pushed to the conclusions drawn from it by Modernists. Nor was his comparison of the growth of doctrine with the growth of physical bodies an innovation. We find the very same illustration used by St. Vincent of Lerins,[19] and St. Vincent is very far from admitting anything approaching substantial change.[20] The application of physical laws of growth is not, therefore, intended to be accurate to the last degree. The analogy is introduced because there is a certain similarity and to a certain extent it is perfectly reasonable, and theologically correct. But the physical laws of the sensible world cannot be predicated in their entirety of the things of the supernatural world, and revelation is of the latter.

In the Modernist interpretation, the analogy of physical growth is introduced not accidentally to explain the progress of dogma, but as a principle to which dogma and everything else which has continued existence must conform. In other words, dogma has no longer something like physical life, but actually physical life itself.

[19] *Commonitorium*, ch. 23, P.L., 50; col. 668.

[20] Ita etiam Christianae Religionis dogma sequatur has decet profectuum leges, ut annis scilicet consolidetur, dilatetur tempore, sublimetur aetate, incorruptum tamen illibatumque permaneat et . . . nihil præterea permutationis admittat nulla proprietatis dispendia, nullam definitionis sustineat varietatem. *loc. cit.*

Hence there is the greatest possible difference between Newman's concept of doctrinal development and that advocated by Loisy or the other members of his school.

Although it is only in comparatively modern times that the idea of doctrinal development has been scientifically treated, the fact of development was noted from an early date. Augustine, while not emphasising the principle of progress theoretically, recognised it in practice in a most striking manner.[21] Though exceedingly conservative,[22] he contributed more to the progress of dogma than any other individual father or theologian.

In the early portion of the 5th century we find St. Vincent of Lerins advocating the principle of doctrinal development. It may seem surprising to find a writer who is so conservative, acknowledging even the possibility of progress. Yet side by side with his "quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus," he sets up the principle that it is right and proper that dogma should develop. After discussing the teaching of Irenaeus, Tertullian and Origen on the apostolicity and immutability of Christian doctrine, he inquires whether such immutability is opposed to all dogmatic progress, and his reply is that it is not. He demands, however, that this progress should not mean any essential change. "Let there be progress," he says, "a widespread and eager progress in every century and age, both of individuals and of the general body, of every Christian and of the whole Church; a progress in intelligence, knowledge and wisdom, but always within

[21]Augustine was evidently aware of the possibility of development in doctrine. In the formula, "Aperitur quod clausum erat et cognoscitur quod latebat," he seems to have in mind the theory which St. Vincent of Lerins formulated later. Aug. *De Baptismo*, Lib. II, ch. 3, P.L. 43, col. 129.

[22]Cf. Lagrange, *Melanges d'Histoire Religieuse* art. *Saint Jerome et Saint Augustine*, pp. 167 *et sqq.*

their natural limits; that is, preserving the same doctrine, the same sense, and the same opinion."[23]

From the time of St. Vincent the concept of development is not formally discussed until the 19th century, although passing reference is made to the possibility of development by various writers during the intervening period.

Gregory the Great, writing towards the end of the 6th century, seems to have in mind some kind of doctrinal progress when he says : " According as the world is approaching its end, the gate of eternal knowledge is being opened more widely."[24] As a rule, the Fathers seem to be fully cognisant of the fact of development, though they do not specifically treat of the principle.

In the Scholastic period, St. Thomas scarcely more than touches on the matter. He states, nevertheless, that there is progress in the knowledge of revealed truths, but no increase in their substance.[25] Even the truths of faith, which were sufficiently explicit, required explanation from time to time.[26] He hints at development in the dogmatic concepts when he says that the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, though not contained in words in Scripture, is contained in the sense of Scripture.[27]

[23]" Crescat igitur oportet, et multum vehementerque proficiat tam singulorum quam omnium, tam unius hominis quam totius Ecclesiæ, ætatum ac Sæculorum gradibus, intelligentia, scientia, sapientia sed in suo dumtaxat genere, in eodem scilicet dogmate eodem sensu, eademque sententia." *Commonit.* ch. 23. Migne, P.L. 50, col. 688.

[24]*Hom. in Ezec.* Lib. 2, Hom. 4, n. 12. Migne, P.L. 76, coll. 980, 981,

[25]*Summa. Theol.* 2, 2, 1, 7.

[26]*Ibid.* 2, 2, 1, 10.

[27]*Ibid.* 1,36, 3 ad 1 . . . de Deo dicere non debemus quod non in Sacra Scriptura non invenitur vel per verba vel per sensum, Licet autem per verba non inveniatur in Sacra Scriptura quod Spiritus Sanctus procedit a Filio, invenitur tamen quantum ad sensum.

Coming to the 15th century, we find more explicit reference to development. Cardinal Turrecremata considers as of divine faith not merely what is directly revealed, but also what follows from it indirectly by a necessary deduction.[28]

The sixteenth century theologians were so much occupied with controversial matters that any formal treatment of the principle of development can hardly be expected. Even Melchior Cano, who discusses practically everything connected with doctrine, does not seem to have made any explicit reference to doctrinal progress. From the theories which he puts forward, however, one can easily see his attitude towards this question. For instance, he says more than once that theological conclusions are to be considered as of divine faith.[29] This opinion shows very little advance on the view proposed by Turrecremata. Cano, however, seems to be confusing development of doctrine with development of theology.

As a representative of the seventeenth century, we may instance De Lugo, who considers progress as the elucidation of what was hitherto obscure.[30] In this opinion, De Lugo is merely following Suarez, who himself really adds nothing to what St. Thomas has already said on the subject.[31]

From the time of De Lugo until the nineteenth century this aspect of doctrine seems to have been almost forgotten. At any rate, the next important figure is Dr. Moehler, who published his "Symbolism" in 1832 In this work frequent reference is made to doctrinal develop-

[28] *Summa de Ecclesia*, Lib. 4, pars. 2, ch. 8.
[29] *De Loc. Theol.* Lib. 6, c. 8, ad. 10, p. 207; lib. 12, c. 6, 7ma præcept. p. 367. Edition, 1734.
[30] *De Fide*, Tom. I, Disp. 3. nos. 69, 70.
[31] Suarez, *De Fide*, Disp. 2, sect. 6, nos. 9 *et sqq.*

ment.[32] He emphasises the importance of tradition as distinct from Scripture.[33] Both, however, go hand in hand. No doctrine of the Church is opposed to Scripture nor does any doctrine suffer substantial change.[34] The outward expression may change, because the significance of words varies from time to time, but the sense of the doctrine is always the same. Though Dr. Moehler contributes very little new, his work shows that the interest of scholars was being aroused in the matter of progress of doctrine.

During the second half of the last century the study of patristic literature brought into prominence an aspect of doctrine which had hitherto received no consideration. The idea of a dogma having, or being able to have, a history does not seem to have occurred to the theologians of the preceding ages. Since this new field of research was opened, it has become more and more attractive to scholars both within the Church and without. The ever-increasing output of treatises on the general history of dogmas, or on the history of a particular dogma, is an index to the enthusiasm of the students of patristic lore. The work of Oxenham on the "Atonement," published in 1863, showed what an amount of interesting matter was hidden away in the writings of the Fathers.[35] In an introductory chapter he gives an excellent treatment of the subject of development of doctrine which in many respects is not inferior to the work published by Cardinal Newman some years earlier. To the treatise of Cardinal Newman reference has already been made.

[32]Cf. *Symbolism*, Vol. II, chapter 5. Edition, London, 1843.
[33]Vol. II, p. 36.
[34]L.c., p. 50.
[35]Oxenham, *History of the Dogma of the Atonement*: London, 1863.

CHAPTER III

Various Causes of Development

IN the foregoing chapters we have seen that God has revealed to man a certain body of truths. These truths He has committed to the guardianship of the Church. The primary duty of the Church is to preserve the revealed doctrines and hand them on to posterity. The doctrines, themselves, are really the word of God, and not the result of academic research or private judgment.[1] Being the word of God, they are immutable unless God Himself quantitatively changes them, and the Scriptures tell us that the revelation given by Christ is final.[2] Hence the doctrines of Christian revelation are absolutely changeless. But immutability does not mean that these truths remain static and incapable of progress—it means that so far as the actual doctrines are concerned there can be no addition to them or subtraction from them. There is, nevertheless, room for development. They cannot be immediately grasped in their full significance. Certain aspects of them remain obscure, and even when the doctrines are perfectly clear there is often difficulty in expressing the precise meaning which was intended to be conveyed. In the course of time these obscurities, or at any rate some of them, gave way to light. Their full import will never be known in

[1] Pius IX, *contra Hermesianos*, Cavallera, *op. cit.* n. 212, p. 123.
[2] *Ep. ad Heb.* i, 1.

this world, because the finite mind is of its very nature unable to comprehend the Infinite. Still, knowledge of the Infinite, though it can never be complete, can continue increasing. Hence, strictly speaking, development is not applied to doctrine, but to our knowledge thereof. In the twentieth century we have a more detailed and scientific knowledge of the doctrine of the Incarnation, for instance, than the second century Apologists had. That does not mean that our faith is necessarily greater than theirs, for they believed that the Son of God became Man just as we do. But there were many problems connected with the Incarnation which they never adverted to, many aspects buried in obscurity which were made manifest only centuries after their time. The real kernel of doctrinal development is centred in this change from obscurity to clearness. Development etymologically means "unveiling." As applied to doctrine, therefore, it connotes the removal of those objects which prevent us seeing certain implications of revelation which are not immediately evident. When these obstacles are taken away, the doctrine shines out in a new light. What was hitherto vague now becomes precise; what was dark becomes clear; what was implicit becomes explicit.

With regard to these obstacles, some are inherent in revelation and pertain to its very nature. They arise from the inadequacy of human language to express, and of human reason to comprehend, the full content of a divine gift. Hence they are removed to a certain extent from the sphere of development. But human ignorance is the cause of much of the obscurity, and everything which tends to remove this obscurity will be a factor in development. Though human language cannot fully express the meaning of a revealed truth, that expression can be rendered less inadequate. And though

the human mind cannot exhaust the implications of divine teaching, it can continue bringing forth new aspects or phases of this teaching. In the elucidation of doctrine both the Church and the individual receive a certain help from the Holy Ghost, but such help might be classed as guidance or direction. Human causes play an important part in the evolution of doctrine. One might even say reason dominates every stage of development—reason, that is, guided by faith. Apart from reason, which is a general cause, practically every science which is worthy of the name contributes something to the development of doctrine. Logic gives the rules according to which the intellect ought to proceed in the process of reasoning, and points out pitfalls which are to be avoided. Philosophy contributes certain concepts which are found to be of the greatest service in expressing with accuracy the sense of the revealed truths. Theology, of course, has for its object the scientific explanation of the Catholic dogmas, and thus is more intimately concerned with doctrinal development than any other science. Again, the certain conclusions of what are called the natural sciences sometimes serve to clarify some obscure point of doctrine; for example, the findings of Galileo contributed to the development of the doctrine of inspiration in the case of the Scriptures, and the conclusions of medical science to a certain extent elucidate the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception by disproving medieval theories of the pre-natal life of the fœtus. Then, too, the sense of the faithful, the practice of the Church, the liturgy—each is a factor in development, and very often by no means a negligible factor. The sense of the faithful is seen in the development of the cult of the saints, and is nowhere more apparent than in the development of the cult of the Blessed Virgin. The

practice of the Church was a useful asset in the progress of the doctrine of infant baptism. Again the study of Scripture was an immense aid to the Christian teachers. History shows that it was used from the beginning of the Christian era to expound more fully the teaching of the Apostles. The writings of the Fathers, in their turn, cleared up numerous difficulties and introduced new ideas. In a word, there is scarcely a branch of human knowledge which has not in some way or another assisted Catholic scholars in their endeavour to unfold "the many-sided wisdom of God."[3]

[3] *Eph.* 3, 10.

CHAPTER IV

Descriptive Laws of Doctrinal Progress

BEFORE treating specifically of the causes of development, it is necessary to examine what truths may be considered as revealed. The Scriptures do not give us a system of doctrines drawn up and tabulated like the Ten Commandments. There are some truths revealed expressly, that is, the precise doctrine is stated in so many words, *e.g.*, the Word was God,[1] Christ is one with the Father,[2] etc. Other truths are formally revealed, but obscurely or implicitly. This is sometimes called "equivalent" revelation. Such truths are rightly accepted on the testimony of God, because in revealing, God accommodated himself to human modes of expression, and in ordinary language, when anything is affirmed, its equivalent is affirmed and its opposite denied. Theologians distinguish several cases of equivalent revelation. The definition is said to be contained in the term defined, *e.g.*, Son implies "begottenness"; a relative implies a correlative, *e.g.*, the existence of a Father implies the existence of a Son; revelation of the whole means revelation of the parts, *e.g.*, Christ is man, implies that Christ had a human body and soul; the conclusion drawn from two premises both of which are revealed, is considered also as revealed, *e.g.*, Christ is

[1] *John* i, 1.
[2] *John* x, 30.

God; but Christ is the Son of Mary; therefore Mary is the Mother of God.[3] The particular propositions contained in a non-strict universal are considered as revealed. For instance, it is revealed that all men are to be judged; therefore, I may believe on the authority of God that I shall be judged. This, however, is a case where the particular is necessarily contained in the universal, and everyone will admit that such propositions are revealed. There is difference of opinion when the particular is contained in the universal only "contingently." For example, it is of divine faith that all the Popes are infallible. May one, then, believe on the authority of God that the reigning Pontiff is infallible? The proposition is only "contingently" contained in the general statement; that is to say, its truth depends on various circumstances which *may* conceivably be absent, *e.g.*, whether he has the required qualifications, whether he was legitimately elected, etc. Granting certainty on these points, there does not seem to be anything to prevent one making an act of divine faith in the infallibility of the present Pope. In matters of faith all that is required in the motives of credibility is reasonable moral certainty. Or, to take another example, may one make an act of divine faith in the Real Presence in a particular tabernacle? Again, the particular proposition is contingently contained in the universal. Whether Our Divine Lord is present depends on whether the priest was validly ordained and has said a valid Mass. If, then, one has moral certitude regarding these contingencies, may one consider the Real Presence as of divine faith? In whatever way theologians answer the question, the ordinary sense of the faithful certainly

[3]Lépicier, *De Stabilitate et progressu dogmatum*, p. 33. Rome: Desclée & Co., 1910.

points to their acceptance of the Real Presence on the authority of God, for they adore Christ and make acts of faith in His Presence.

Theologians distinguish yet another series of propositions which have an intimate connection with revelation. These are said to be virtually revealed. While not contained in the revealed deposit implicitly, they are seen to follow from the truths therein contained not directly, but indirectly, through the medium of some truth known by the natural powers of reason. In other words, a virtually revealed truth is the conclusion of a syllogism of which one premise is divinely revealed and the other is naturally known. Whether truths of this kind belong to the deposit of faith is very much disputed. Theologians of high repute may be quoted on either side. Melchior Cano holds unequivocally that such conclusions belong to the revealed deposit. Such a proposition, he says, is to be considered a " Catholic truth," precisely as if it had been revealed by Christ"[4] The opinion of Cano may, however, be due to his failure to distinguish between equivalent and virtual revelation. In the text just quoted he reverts to what he has already said,[5] and in that context he is treating not of what are now called theological con-

[4]Cano, *De Locis Theologicis*, Lib. XII, chap. VI, 7ma præcep. As the passage is interesting, it may be well to quote it in full. Si vel ecclesia, vel concilium, vel sedes Apostolica, vel etiam sancti una mente eademque voce aliquam Theologiae conclusionem et confecerint, et fidelibus etiam præscripserint; hæc veritas catholica ita censebitur, ut si esset per se a Christo revelata.

Suarez, *De Fide*, Disp. III, Sect. XI, n. 7, says that Cano amended his opinion later. The reference (lib. 12, chap. 7, 8th precept), given by Suarez, must be a mistaken one, as this matter is not touched upon in the chapter to which he refers. In the 8th precept of chapter 6, Cano admits that his opinion may be wrong, but he does not show any tendency to change his views. His words are : " Fieri potest, ut aliorum iudicio errem, sed meo ita prorsus existimo."

[5]Lib. VI, chap. VIII, ad. 10.

clusions, but of truths implicitly revealed, which we have already discussed. Vega[6] follows the opinion of Cano, but again it is not clear that he means to treat of truths virtually revealed. His examples, at any rate, generally take the form of particular propositions contained in a non-strict universal. The Salamanca theologians take the opposite view, and they are supported by the Thomists.[7] Suarez and De Lugo attempt a compromise. Theological conclusions, they say, are not of divine faith before definition by the Church, but they are of divine faith after definition.[8] This opinion seems to be based on the peculiar power which they attribute to the Church acting under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Suarez, indeed, goes so far as to say that the privilege of infallibility which the Church enjoys is equivalent to revelation.[9] Among modern theologians, Lépicier holds that a virtually revealed conclusion remains merely a theological conclusion until there is added to it the authority of the Church. As soon as this occurs, the conclusion is to be considered as of divine Catholic faith.[10]

Notwithstanding the weight of authority in favour of the opposite view, the more reasonable opinion seems to be that a theological conclusion as such can never become an object of divine faith, whether it is defined by the Church or not. Divine faith demands as formal object the authority of God revealing. As already stated,

[6] *In Trident*, lib. IX, cap. 39.

[7] Salman, *De Fide*, Disp. I, nn. 124-133.

[8] Suarez, *De Fide*, Disp. III, Sect. XI, n. 11, pp. 99-100; De Lugo, *De Fide*, Disp. I, Sect. XIII, n. 274.

[9] Suarez, l.c. n. 11. Signum est habere infallibilitatem proximam et immediatam ex assistentia Spiritus Sancti quæ *æquivalet revelationi* vel consummat illam.

[10] Lépicier, *De Stabilitate et Progressu Dogmatum*, Part I, n. 14, p, 33. Cf. *Ibid*, pp. 37-38.

God may be the author of a truth by revealing it either explicitly or implicitly—the latter when the truth is not immediately obvious, but is brought to light by human reason. In this case, however, the truth is in no way depending on man's natural powers. Human reason enters not as a cause, but as a condition. With strict theological conclusions the matter is different. The result is due both to God and to man—one premise is formally revealed, the other is known by the light of reason apart altogether from any divine revelation. This being so, the conclusion has the weakness of the weaker premise, and therefore it cannot be said to be guaranteed solely by the divine authority.[11]

Nor does the theory of Lépicier or Suarez offer a real solution. In the first place, the Church is not God, and therefore the words of the Church are not the words of God except in so far as she is interpreting revelation, which is not the case here. Secondly, there is a vast difference between revelation and infallibility. The fact that a proposition is infallibly true does not imply that the proposition is, therefore, revealed. If theological conclusions are defined by the Church, that definition affirms their objective truth, but does not thereby incorporate them among the truths of revelation. The motive of divine faith must be the divine veracity alone; while in the case under discussion a human element enters, and that not accidentally, but essentially. Furthermore, if a proposition is to be believed as of divine faith

[11]Of course, it is possible that a truth may be known both from natural reason and from revelation, as, *e.g.*, the existence of God, or the freedom of the will. Being revealed, such propositions have the authority of God and hence if a proposition of this class is inserted in the syllogism in the place of the premise known only from reason the conclusion is not strictly a theological conclusion but an implicitly revealed proposition since both the premises can now be considered as divinely revealed.

after definition, it is of divine faith before definition, as the object of the Church is to declare and propose a certain truth as revealed, but the definition does not change the nature of the proposition.

In concrete cases it is often really difficult to decide whether a particular proposition is contained in revelation equivalently or merely virtually. In such cases the authority of the Church is all-important. Conclusions there have been which theologians considered as being almost matters of faith, and which were afterwards proved false.[12] On the other hand, propositions which at one time were regarded as theological conclusions in the strict sense, were later defined and declared to be contained implicitly in the revealed deposit.[13] Thus, although the Church cannot make new revelations, she can and does declare what is revealed and what is not. But it will be found that when the supreme authority defines a doctrine as of divine Catholic faith, the proposition is always said to be contained at least implicitly in Scripture or Tradition. There is no case, so far as I am aware, of a virtually revealed truth being defined as of divine Catholic faith.[14]

[12]For example the geocentricity of the universe.

[13]The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception may be taken as an illustration of this.

[14]Father Murillo, S.J., in his work "*El Progreso en la Revelación Christiana*," part 5, p. 293, criticises at some length the opinion of those who consider "that it is the definition or solemn declaration of the Church which constitutes in dogmas the revealed truths." He shows, firstly, that "dogmas" existed before there was any solemn declaration of the Church (p. 294); secondly, that certain truths were to be believed on the divine authority anterior to any such declaration; thirdly, that a truth is defined *because it is divinely revealed*, and not revealed because it is defined (p. 298).

CHAPTER V

Transcendent Causal Laws of Progress

THE idea of implicit revelation given in the preceding chapter should make clear what is meant by development of doctrine. Development is the making explicit of what was hitherto implicit. A doctrine is implicitly believed at first, later it is denied, either directly or indirectly; this denial occasions much discussion on the matter in question, and finally a stage is reached when the doctrine is advanced clearly and precisely. This gradual process from obscurity into prominence is in a general way what is meant by development of doctrine. Only the essential dogmas of Christianity were explicitly believed from the beginning. As time went on and human reason examined these dogmas, many truths were discovered which had hitherto escaped notice. For a time these implicit truths were accepted without question. Ultimately, however, an occasion arose when some writer, more forward than his contemporaries, denied their veracity. This denial occasioned a further examination, and this latter was concluded by a formal definition of the Church.

It is not to be inferred from this that the supreme authority of the Church remained passive during the process and stepped in at the end to settle the dispute. On the contrary, no phase of the controversy escaped those to whom the deposit had been committed, and the

course of the discussion was followed with the keenest interest.

Section I.—The Authority of the Church.

According to Liberal Protestants and Modernists, and, in fact, all Rationalists, the authority of the Church is neither necessary nor useful in this matter of doctrinal development. While they make no secret of their desire for a stable and unified government in temporal affairs, they are content to leave spiritual affairs to the individual. Every man is captain of his own soul, they say; his destiny is in his own hands. It remains with himself what he will believe about God, or whether he will believe at all. This is the only logical conclusion from the theories of Modernists, who at the same time would call themselves Catholics.

Now, a religion without authority is no religion, just as a state without a government is no state. There is no room for development, because progress, if it did exist, would result in an altogether new entity. Only two courses of action would be possible: either to form a new constitution—which compared with the old, is substantial change—or to stagnate and perish.

The Church, or spiritual state, which was founded by Christ, is to remain for ever. Therefore, there must be union between her members. Union implies an authority, and authority, once admitted, must be active during the whole course. There is no room even for a change of authority, because the constitution is fixed and cannot be changed. Hence in the development of the Church and of its doctrines this one authority must be ever operative.

As an example of what religion can become when there is no adequate authority to settle disputes or define what

is revealed, it is sufficient to refer to Protestantism. At its inception it had a number of doctrines which were generally held. But according as the principle of private judgment became more general, many of these doctrines gradually disappeared. The subsequent history of Protestantism shows what it is to be without a central authority. At the present day, Protestantism as a religion exists only in name. Among its members any doctrine may be believed or not, according to the paltry intelligence of the individual.

Authority is, then, necessary in the Church. Its object is to guard the deposit and to hand it on to posterity. From the very nature of the case, it is to be expected that the ruling power in the Church is somewhat conservative. It has too perfect a sense of its duty to allow even slight modifications of its teaching to take place until new concepts have proved their true worth. On the other hand, the Church readily admits that there are many aspects of her doctrines still latent, and she views with pleasure the labours of those who try to elucidate the revealed dogmas.

Authority in the Church is not, then, a power whose watchword is rigidity. The History of Dogma shows clearly that it is one of the greatest supporters of genuine progress. Like many other things in this world, progress is often erratic. There have been developments in theology which were not genuine developments, but changes. Such aberrations must be guarded against, so that progress may continue along proper lines. The Church, as it were, keeps a middle course, and any turning either to the right or to the left is promptly checked. Nestorius was condemned because he held there were two persons in Christ; Eutyches because he held there was only one nature. Jansenism was not

tolerated because it was too strict, and Laxism shared the same fate because it was not strict enough. Loisy was declared a heretic for, amongst other things, refusing to admit the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, and about the same time, Corbato, a Spaniard, was condemned for asserting the Immaculate Conception of St. Joseph.[1]

The Church, as the divinely appointed guardian of the truths of revelation, does not and cannot allow herself to be intimidated by the authority or learning of those who attempt to introduce developments contrary to the spirit of her doctrine. Development must proceed in conformity with Scripture and tradition, otherwise it will not be admitted. This does not mean that opinions once universally held on non-defined matters may not change; it merely implies that when the old theories are proved untrue, their place must be filled by others which are better in harmony with the revealed doctrines. But the defined teaching of the Church must be always vindicated, whatever be the consequences. She refused to sanction a royal divorce although knowing that the refusal meant the alienation of a whole nation from the fold. In our own time she condemned the Modernist movement, though well aware that by so doing she was giving offence to a number of the intellectuals of Europe.

It is, therefore, easy to see that the authority of the Church is a potent factor in the development of doctrine. Her condemnations save us from developments which she regards as spurious, while the decrees of her councils, and the official pronouncements made from time to time, indicate the means which could be used with profit in the elucidation of dogma.

[1] *Acta Ap. Sedis*, Vol. XL, 1907; p. 271; Vol. XLI, 1908, p. 43.

The power of the Church is from the Holy Ghost. Hence in the matter of doctrinal development His influence cannot be overlooked. Although His authority is intangible and cannot be estimated by comparisons of cause and effect, it is, nevertheless, always present. His mission is primarily to the Apostles, to complete the revelation; and secondarily, to the later Church, to guide her during her course and to preserve her from error.[2] He is the vivifying and invigorating principle in the Church. And His mission is not merely to the successors of the Apostles; His influence permeates the whole Church and affects every member thereof, so that every development of doctrine may be ascribed ultimately to His direction and help.

Section II.—Human Reason.

In the matter of doctrinal development, the influence of the Holy Ghost, considered precisely as such, is purely divine. The authority of the Church may be considered to have a divino-human influence, seeing that the privilege of infallibility rests immediately in the assistance of the Holy Ghost. It is only natural to inquire whether there is also a human cause which is operative in every stage of development. Such a universal cause we find in human reason. Take any phase of human life, any science, any philosophy; we find that progress in these is in proportion to the amount of mental power expended on them.

" Mind is the instrument by which man advances and by which each advance is secured and made the vantage ground for new advances. Though he may not, by taking thought, add a cubit to his stature, man may by taking thought extend his knowledge of the universe and

[2] *John*, 14.26 : 16.13 : 14.16.

his power over it. . . . The narrow span of human life allows the individual to go but a short distance, but though each generation may do little, yet generations succeeding to the gain of their predecessors may gradually elevate the status of mankind."[3]

The desire for progress in knowledge is one of the features of the human mind. The intellect is always active, always striving for further information. This innate curiosity is assertive from the dawn of reason, and develops as the organism develops. From an examination of surrounding phenomena which are evident, it seeks to discover the cause of these phenomena which may not be evident. This course of action is apparent in the history of every science, every art, every human movement. Given a number of facts or truths, the mind sets out immediately to classify and compare them, to seek relations between them, to discover a law by which they may be correlated, and finally to systematise the knowledge thus attained.

While it is true that environment has great influence on the inception and progress of an individual science or art, there is, at least, one aspect of human activity which is common to the whole race. Whether it be due to unconscious selfishness or some other and nobler cause, man has always been interested in himself. Questions of his own origin and destiny seem to have excited his curiosity. Coupled with these were questions regarding God and the world. That these were living problems in every age, the records of civilisations long dead bear testimony. The Egyptians attempted an explanation, and so did the Babylonians. The Greeks brought all the force of their highly-trained minds to bear on the matter. Similarly, to-day, these self-same questions are engaging

[3]Henry George, *Progress and Poverty*, p. 358. London, 1902.

the intellects of men just as keenly as they did in the time of the Pharaohs. The idea that a complete solution of these all-important matters was impossible to unaided reason never occurred to the patient investigators. Among some nations a certain stage was reached, at which progress seems to have ceased. In more intellectual nations, like Greece, reason continued to essay an adequate solution. Yet religion and philosophy, as they existed generally at the birth of Christ, show all too plainly that however powerful human reason may be, a satisfying solution must be sought outside it.[4]

At the beginning of the Christian era the primitive revelation had been retained by only one people, the Jews. Among the Greeks its place was taken by metaphysical speculation, in which they were easily the leaders of the world. Hence it is easy to see that the truths of Christianity were destined to be submitted to a searching analysis at the very beginning of their course. Such an action was inevitable. There was a body of truths of vital importance to the whole human race. These truths purported to emanate from One who being man was also God; and further, the new system was opposed to contemporary religions and philosophies. It is not to be wondered at if the development of Christian doctrine proceeded rapidly. Its truths have occupied the attention of the subtlest intellects for nearly two thousand years. It does not matter whether these minds were engaged in opposing or in

[4]Cf. St. Thomas, *Summa*. 1, 44-2, where he distinguishes three stages in the progress of thought. In the first stage, people took a gross, material view of things. They grasped only the accidents. Next they became aware of substantial change, and made an effort to explain it. Finally the mind arrived at the consideration of being as such. In the article the function of the intellect is well brought out—its primary aim being to get beneath the surface of things, *intus-legere*, and arrive at their ultimate causes.

defending, because development results from interchange of opinions. Opposition stimulates defence, and the more any movement is opposed the more is the true worth of that movement brought into view.

An examination of the Gospels gives us clearly to understand how much Christ left to be done by future generations. He taught as one having authority. He did not propose His doctrines as conclusions laboriously deduced by a long process of reasoning, nor did He often advance arguments to support His views. The doctrines of the Gospel are advanced not so much as doctrines, but as facts. The Incarnation is a fact just as much as the Resurrection. The unity of the Father and Son is stated without proof, save that the statement is the word of God, and similarly throughout. It was left to posterity to show that these truths, though they transcended human reason, were, nevertheless, in conformity with it, and that the religion of Christ was the only one which could bring to man true happiness here and hereafter; in other words, Christ left the development of His doctrines to future generations.

While being so simple that they can be readily grasped by the most uneducated, the doctrines of the Gospel are so full of meaning that they will never be entirely comprehended in any generation. It is the duty of human reason, however, to continue investigating, because in this way alone can the truths be fittingly appreciated. While the truths themselves are to be applicable to all in every age of the world, the arguments which are used to support them in one epoch may be useless in another. Again, not all the doctrines develop equally. At one time attention may be focussed on a particular doctrine, at another on a different doctrine. Similarly, one aspect of revelation may appeal in a peculiar fashion to one

people, while another nation may have its chief interest centred in a different phase altogether. The collective mind follows the analogy of the individual mind. Just as the individual cannot immediately grasp a complex truth, so neither can the body corporate. Reason proceeds gradually, and in the end attains an adequate understanding of the truth in question. It is left to posterity to bring into a system the various aspects which have been brought to light.

In the development of doctrine, therefore, we can distinguish two transcendent causes, the authority of the Church, and the power of human reason.[5] In fact, the activity of these two causes might, with a certain amount of truth, be called the matter and form of development—reason being responsible for the indeterminate part, the Church for the determinate.

[5]The influence of the Holy Ghost as a factor in development is included under the authority of the Church.

CHAPTER VI

Factors in Doctrinal Development in the Early Church

THE function of the intellect is to attain a knowledge of the causes of things. But the human mind cannot acquire this knowledge immediately; it must proceed gradually. It is unable to grasp any complex reality in one comprehensive act. But it considers various aspects, and by a synthesis of these it obtains a fuller concept of the object in question. Hence various sciences may have the same material object, while their method and their conclusions may be totally different. Each science tends to the development of a particular aspect of the matter, while a combination of the results of all, affords a greater amount of information, and therefore a more extensive progress in knowledge.

Now, it may happen that, on account of their outlook on life, men or nations are inclined to regard phenomena from a particular angle, forgetting for the time that there are other aspects of equal importance. But this procedure is no reflection either on the men or on the matter. It is merely one of the necessary drawbacks of a finite intellect. Yet the result of these mental habits was to call into being set ideas and narrow beliefs, as well as standardized modes of thought. And even though, when unaided reason is the only guide, these fixed ideas

and modes of thought may be comparatively short-lived—for the succeeding generation may set up others in their place—yet, at any particular period, they are mighty influences to be reckoned with by the pioneers of a new school.

Now, the doctrines of Christianity were not published to a virgin world, but to a world already grown old. Certain habits of mind had been formed, and a definite outlook on life evolved. Hence, from the nature of things, a collision between the established order and the new teaching was inevitable. The result of the conflict could not but show itself on the truths of Christianity when that movement finally emerged victorious.

It is important to notice two institutions which were flourishing when the Apostles began to spread the Kingdom of God: one, an empire which had spread over every known land, the Roman Empire; the other, a civilisation which was almost equally extensive, the Greek. Just as Rome had incorporated practically every country, while allowing the foreign dominions a certain amount of independence, so the Greek civilisation had absorbed almost all other civilisations, including the Roman, while, at the same time, admitting to these latter something of their old individuality. If the presence of the Roman eagle signified a Roman possession, the presence of the Greek language signified equally a capitulation to Greek culture. Here, then, were two great forces already in action when the Apostolic labours began. It is only to be expected that both these forces would be hostile to the new doctrines; the one because they were in opposition to current philosophical speculation; the other because they might tend to the overthrow of the State. Thus, from its very infancy the Church

had to fight, at first for toleration, or indeed for life, and then for conquest.

Section I.—The Philosophical Factor in the Patristic Greek Church.

Greece and Rome were united in their antagonism to Christianity. It is interesting to notice how they differed in expressing that antagonism. The Greeks could not at first appreciate the revealed teaching—that is, the educated Greeks. They were unable to understand its truths and what could not be proved by reason they refused to accept. But their principal weapon against Christianity was philosophic argument. The result is seen in the number of heresies which arose in the East from the first century onwards. The Romans, on the other hand, being a practical people, do not seem to have wasted words. Their criterion was whether the new religion was for the good of the State, and, if it was not, it must not be allowed to function. The result of this action is seen in the persecutions.

The opposition, which was present in the beginning, instead of abolishing Christianity, only gave the Apostles and their successors greater zeal in defending its doctrines. While miracles were of daily occurrence, and the works of the Holy Ghost visible to all, nothing further was required to prove that Christianity was all it claimed to be. But according as the Church became stronger, Christians were left to defend their faith more by human means. It became evident that if the Church were to succeed it would have to come to terms with the world to the extent of expressing its truths in such a way that there would be no misunderstanding. There was at hand a language peculiarly suitable for this. In the first place, the Greek tongue was universal in the civilised

world, and in the second place it was especially rich in words capable of expressing the most profound ideas. For centuries before the Christian era it had been employed to convey the subtlest modes of thought. Thus scientifically developed by the philosophers, the language of Greece became the vehicle by which the truths of revelation were given to the world.

Now, a language is more than a mere collection of words. It is the expression of ideas of individuals and of a nation. It embodies the mentality of the nation to which it belongs. One cannot remain among a foreign people, making continual use of their language, without being to some extent influenced by their outlook on life. As an example of this, we may consider the Synoptic Gospels and that of St. John. The same truths are expressed in both, but the mode of expression is altogether different. The simple statements of the earlier Evangelists have given place to a more philosophical style. In other words, the process of development has begun.

It is said by opponents of Catholicism that many of the doctrines of the Church were incorporated from Greek philosophy.[1] Nothing could be farther from the truth. What was done was to make Greek philosophy contribute to show the reasonableness of the Christian doctrines. It is asserted, for example, that St. John borrowed his doctrines of the Logos from the speculations of Philo. Now, the fact that Philo made use of the term does not prove that St. John was indebted to him for it. St. John must, of course, have been acquainted with the metaphysical speculations current in his time, but his aim was to show that the true philosophy was that preached by the Apostles. The

[1]Dr. Hatch, for example, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1888.

Logos of St. John is in direct contrast to that of Philo. The Logos of philosophy is an intermediate being, impersonal and created. The Logos of St. John, on the other hand, is distinct from God the Father, yet divine; distinct from the world, yet its creator; is a person, and though God, has become man. There is therefore no parity between the Logos of Scripture and the Logos of philosophy. While in employing the term, St. John may have been influenced by current speculation, he could have found a basis for his terminology in the Old Testament. In Psalm 32, v. 6, it is stated that " by the *word* of the Lord the heavens were established " ; in Psalm 106, v. 20, " He sent his *word* and healed them" (referring to the Providence of God over the afflicted); Isaias 55, verse 11, reads, " So shall my *word* be which shall go forth from my mouth. It shall not return to me void, but it shall do whatsoever I please, and shall prosper in the things for which I have sent it." The Old Testament therefore speaks of a *word* which goes forth as a messenger, actually accomplishing things and having a creative power, and this concept of it is much closer to the mind of St. John than the idea suggested by Philo.

Exception is taken to certain words which St. Paul uses, and which are said to be expressions of ideas adopted from contemporary religions. It is said, for instance, that he inaugurated the deification of Christ by calling him " Kurios." It is true that when emperors were raised to the rank of gods they were called " Kurioi," and the term was applied occasionally to the other heathen deities. But St. Paul had no intention of deifying Christ. For Paul, He was always God. The word " Kurios " was used in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament to translate the divine name, and in reference to Christ the use of the term was a distinct

claim to divinity. It implied that Christ shared in all the attributes of Jahweh.[2]

Though the Greek language undoubtedly was a great asset in the explanation of doctrine, Greek philosophy contributed more directly to this development. The Fathers of the Church did not scruple to use whatever matter lay at hand to elaborate, clarify, and explain the Gospel truths. Many of the Fathers had, before their conversion, been trained in the philosophical schools. In Christianity they found many truths analogous to those with which they were already familiar. Disciples of Plato, for example, had reasoned to the existence of a Supreme Idea which that philosopher called God, and which he identified with the Good. To a certain extent also, he had concluded that the soul was immortal. If the soul acts in accordance with its nature, which is divine, it may expect a life of happiness hereafter, because, since it participates in the Idea of Life, it cannot be annihilated. While the Platonic hypothesis leads directly to a kind of Idealistic Pantheism, it contains a certain element of truth which will be extracted from it when it comes into contact with the vigorous movement of Christianity.

Platonism and Christianity both defended the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, but there is little similarity apparent in the explanations of these concepts as given by the respective schools. The Platonic God was One, but His unity was refined to such an extent that He became an abstraction. He was simply Being. He had no relation with the world which He did not

[2]Kurios, St. Paul *ad Rom*, 10.9, 12, 13; 14.6 *et passim*; I Cor. 7.22; Eph. 6.8, etc.; cf. Prat. *Théologie de S. Paul*, Vol. II, p. 140. For St. Paul's alleged indebtedness to mystery religions, *vid.* Prat, *op. cit.* Vol. II, pp. 467-475; cf. also Lagrange, *Melanges d'Histoire religieuses*, pp. 69-130; Lebreton, *Les Origines du dogme de la Trinité*, pp. 335, 372 *et sqq.*

create, or with men, or with anything material, for matter and spirit were by nature mutually opposed. Still this Platonic idea seems to be at the root of the early heresies. Monarchians admitted one God, but they had no place for a real Trinity. Subordinationists would tolerate the divinity of the Son and the Holy Ghost, but these could not be regarded as God in the same sense as the Father. It was only after years of controversy that it was defined that the Son had the same substance as the Father, and that the three Persons of the Trinity were equal in everything.

The relation of the Logos to God having been decided, attention was next turned to the relations existing between the divinity and the humanity of Christ. It was, of course, always recognised that He was both God and man but how the connection was effected had not yet been discussed. Had He a real human body and soul, or did the Logos take the place of the soul ? Was there a complete separation between the divinity and the humanity, or was the union so complete that the humanity was absorbed in the divinity? Questions such as these were being asked in the fourth century. They show that a more intensive study was being made of the doctrines. To these questions almost every possible answer was given. They gave rise respectively to the heresies of Apollinaris, Nestorius, and Eutyches.

It is not our purpose here to pursue in detail the course of development of these doctrines. It is sufficient to note that the controversies had given to Christianity a completely new vocabulary, borrowed from Greek philosophy. Terms such as being, substance, nature, person, energy, etc., were incorporated, and a new science was being evolved, the science of theology.

Section II.—The Philosophic Factor in the Patristic Latin Church.

Before passing from the consideration of philosophy, it must be noted that it was not the exclusive monopoly of the Eastern Church. One aspect of the Eastern mind is strikingly illustrated by the history of the early Church, that is, its aptitude for creating disputes and its inability to settle them when they had arisen. On every occasion the assistance of the Western Church had to be invoked to give the orthodox teaching on controverted points of doctrine. Christianity seems to have been better understood in the West than in the East. For example, Tertullian, though wrong in the details, in his general statement of the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, anticipates the teaching of Nice and Ephesus.[3] As a rule, however, Western theologians were not so much interested in the metaphysical side of the Christian truths as in their practical aspects. Nevertheless, when occasion demanded, the writers of the West gave evidence of clearness of vision and depth of thought unequalled by Eastern theologians.[4]

It has been already stated that the influence of Greek philosophy is seen in the nature of the heresies of the early centuries, while the attitude of the Roman State is demonstrated by the successive persecutions. The work of these two factors was not, however, confined to the results mentioned. The natural outcome of the Greek civilisation was an analysis of the concept of God, the ultimate end of the Christian religion. On the other

[3]Tert. *Apol.* 21, Migne, P.L. 1, coll. 457 *et sqq*; *Adv. Prax.* 8,9, 22,27. P.L. 2, coll. 163, 164, 183, 191-192; *De Carne Christi*, 5. *Ibid*, coll. 760, 761.

[4]Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, P.L. 42.

hand, the genius of the West was principally centred in the means by which that end was to be attained.[5] There can be no doubt that the practical outlook on life which was so characteristic of the Roman mind communicated itself to the Fathers of the Western Church, and exercised a certain influence on the doctrines which they developed. The majority of the subjects treated are of immediate practical utility. It may be said, of course, that the particular line of action adopted by the Western Fathers was primarily due to the peculiar nature of the heresies which arose in the West, but it may be replied that these erroneous opinions themselves, whether they pertain to faith, as the Pelagian heresy, or to practice, as the Re-baptism controversy, seem to be, from their practical nature the outcome of the Roman civilisation.[6]

In Tertullian's attempts at systematic theology we see the juridical mind and the Roman love for order which amounted almost to a passion. Tertullian seldom indulges in speculation, nor does philosophy influence him to any degree. He seems to treat the Christian doctrines as facts, and strives to express these in as lucid and precise a manner as he can. He is more concerned with action than with speculation.[7]

Passing to Cyprian, a new phase of doctrinal development comes into view—that of Ecclesiology. For Cyprian the central idea of the Church is its unity. He conceives the Church as a universal society, composed of the bishops, who govern, and the people, who are

[5]Compare subjects treated by the Eastern and Western theologians respectively in Bardenhewer's Patrology.

[6]*Re* this characteristic of Roman culture, cf. Bäumer, *Histoire du Bréviare*, French Trans. I, p. 2, note 5; Alzog: *Univ. Ch. Hist.* Vol. I, p. 68; Nolloth: *The Rise of the Christian Religion*, pp. 114 *et sqq*; McGiffert: *Hist. of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, p. 152.

[7]Tixeront: *Histoire des Dogmes I*, p. 333 *et sqq*; D'Alès: *Théologie de Tertullien*, pp. 496, 497.

governed. It is, therefore, a spiritual empire, because it embraces all peoples; its members must be of one mind, as becomes the children of the same family, united to one another by the internal bond of faith and charity, and by the external bond of subjection to the lawful ecclesiastical superiors. Furthermore, he holds in theory, at least, that the centre of unity lies in the Church of Rome.[8]

It is difficult to estimate the respective values of the several influences at work in moulding the thought and expression of St. Augustine. In the clearness and precision with which he grasped the truths of Christianity he shows unmistakeable signs of Roman culture. Though a thorough master of all the current systems of philosophy, he never allows faith to be subjugated to reason. His constant aim is to possess a reasoned faith, but faith always comes first. In his exegetical works he is as loyal to the literal interpretation as any disciple of the School of Antioch, while in his Homilies his use of allegory is worthy of the best traditions of the Alexandrines. He insists strongly on a thorough understanding of the words of Scripture, and the rules which he proposes are admirable. But his chief reason for a literal interpretation is because otherwise there will be a defective spiritual knowledge. Unless one understands exactly what is said, one will never grasp what is symbolised.[9]

[8]Cyprian: *De Unitate Cath. Ecclesiæ*, 4, 5, 6, 7, 14, 17: P.L. 4, coll. 498 *et sqq.* Tixeront: *Histoire des Dogmes*, 1, pp. 418, *et sqq.* Bardenhewer: *Patrology*, pp. 192, 194. Batiffol: *L'Église Naissante*, Paris, 1919; pp. 429-439. D'Herbigny: *Theologica de Ecclesia*, Paris, 1921; Vol. I, pp. 165, 166.

[9]*De Doct. Christ* I, cap. 36-37; II, cap. 11, 14, 15, 28; III, cap. 1. For rules regarding numbers *vid. Ibid* II, cap. 16; Migne, P.L. 34. As illustrating his twofold attitude towards the Scriptures, compare his exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, or that to the Galatians, with his treatise on the Gospel of St. John. In the former work he

Although he could not help being to some extent affected by contemporary speculation, his contribution to doctrinal development is due not so much to these external influences as to the man himself. Endowed with an exceptionally brilliant intellect, guided and promoted by an enduring faith, he was enabled to pursue his investigations of revealed doctrines to a degree impossible to anyone of lesser ability. Difficulties he certainly encountered, but where his natural reason failed, his faith came to the rescue. In elucidating the various problems which presented themselves, in forming theories by which to explain them, and in the reasoned co-ordination of the many aspects of doctrinal truths, his philosophic training must have been of immense importance. Perhaps the most striking element in the writings of Augustine is the force with which he put forward his arguments. He has not the impetuosity of Tertullian, but he has that quiet power of convincing when the methods of Tertullian would only repel. In a word, he is always a philosopher, but he is also always a Christian.

It is a serious mistake, however, to consider that Augustine is infallible, or that every theory and every opinion of his should be upheld. One of the marks of his greatness is the fact that he was great enough to admit that he made mistakes. In his Retractations he repudiates certain views which he held in his earlier works, and had he lived longer he would certainly have corrected others. But his work is not to be judged by individual passages or particular theories; it is to be

seldom leaves the text, while in the latter he often seems to use the words of the Gospel simply as an excuse for speculation, *e.g.*, *In Joann*, Tract VI, Migne 35, coll. 1425 *et sqq*; Tr. VII. 10; col. 1442. Compare Tr. VIII, which is literally interpreted, with Tr. IX, which is allegorical, etc.

judged as a whole. There is no doubt that he governed the theological world for centuries, and in certain respects governs it still. And in the matter of doctrinal development, Augustine is of no less importance. He had treated of doctrines which were passed over, or only lightly touched by his predecessors. These he examined to a point beyond which human reason has found it difficult to proceed. Augustine's influence on the progress of dogma may reasonably be considered as due to four characteristics of his work—his comprehensive grasp of the revealed truths, his genius in proposing theories to explain difficult problems, his readiness in the use of analogy to clarify some abstruse point of doctrine, and, finally, the virile logic which he employed throughout. No doubt, he erred occasionally, but his errors are amply redeemed by the energetic manner in which he defended and elucidated the doctrines of Christianity.

While it is true that the Latin Fathers did not give philosophy the same prominence in the explanation of the truths of revelation as the Greeks, their treatment of doctrine shows that philosophy was by no means despised. The precision of their language in setting forth the teaching of the Church is sufficient evidence of their indebtedness to their philosophic training. It must be admitted, however, that some of the early writers show little love for philosophy. Tertullian is opposed to it because it has given rise to so many heresies.[10] He, nevertheless, admits that philosophy is not altogether false,[11] and he frequently makes use of philosophical concepts to explain the Christian truths. Cyprian considers that philosophy has absolutely nothing in

[10] *Apol.* 46, Migne P.L. 1, coll. 566-581; *De Praescrip.* 7, P.L. 2, coll. 19-20; *De Anima* 3, P.L. 2, coll. 651-652.
[11] *Apolog.* 21,22, 48, Migne P.L. 1, 456-7; 464, 595.

common with the real truth. Its influence simply gives rise to heresy.[12] Hilary maintains that philosophy should be kept completely apart from faith, and holds that the former is incapable of throwing any light on matters of doctrine.[13] Ambrose says that philosophy prevents us finding Christ, and adds that whatever truth it has was borrowed from revelation.[14]

Nor are the Greek Fathers unanimous regarding the supreme importance of philosophy. Gregory of Nazianzen, for example, says that its introduction into the Church is like one of the Egyptian plagues.[15] This extreme view of Gregory was occasioned by the fact that the Arians and Manichaeans made such great use of philosophy to support their heretical teaching. But as a rule the Greek Fathers were much more favourably disposed to philosophy than the Latins, and even those who were completely opposed to it, whether in the East or in the West, could not altogether escape its influence.

Section III.—Scriptural Exegesis.

There is no doubt, then, that philosophy manifested itself from the earliest times as a valuable factor in doctrinal development. It gave the Fathers new concepts and new words; it gave them the rules of right reasoning; it showed them how to put their arguments and their conclusions in the most forcible manner, and above all, it taught them the necessity of method in their work. Its place was to minister to revealed truth, and to be guided by the principles of Scripture and tradition. Now, the Scriptures themselves do not present a series

[12] *De bono patientiae* 2, P.L. 4, col. 623.
[13] *De Trin.* 1.13 : 9.8 : 12.19, 20; P.L. 10; coll. 34, 287, 444, 445.
[14] *De Virginitate* 14, 92, P.L. 16, col. 289, Epist. 37-6, P.L. 16, col. 1,085; cf. *In Apocal.* 17, P.L. 17, col. 912.
[15] *Orat.* 32.25, P.G. 36, col. 202.

of axioms which anyone may understand at a glance. Very often truths are contained therein only obscurely, and long explanation is required before these truths and their implications are made clear. This explanation of Scripture is called Exegesis, and as a science it contributes to the development of doctrine more immediately, perhaps, than philosophy. The aim of the latter is to discover truth. It is applicable to revelation in so far as the divine truths form part of its subject matter. On the other hand, Exegesis has for its sole purpose the elucidation of those truths which are contained in Sacred Scripture. The need of explaining the sacred text was felt even before the time of Christ. The ceremonies of the Synagogue, as we know from the Gospels, consisted of the reading of a passage from the Law or the Prophets, and this was then explained by the Rabbis. Much of this Rabbinical interpretation had been reduced to writing at the beginning of the Christian era, and being at variance with the accepted Christian doctrine, it demanded attention from the very beginning.

It must be noted that there are two classes of Scriptural interpretation: one, the result of the studies of experts in Biblical matters, private interpretation; the other, the particular sense in which the Church has definitely stated that a certain passage is to be explained, the authoritative interpretation. It has been already said that exegesis of the latter kind is of supreme importance from the standpoint of doctrinal development, because the Church places beyond doubt that a doctrine is explicitly or implicitly contained in the passage in question. But taken in the ordinarily accepted sense, exegesis holds an important place in the progress of dogma.

In the early Church the only explanation of Scripture was to be found in tradition. The teachers simply

handed on what they themselves had received. Soon, however, heretical tendencies arose, and in the theories put forward the genuine Scriptures were twisted to favour the false doctrine, or else a new book of Scripture was invented and published under the name of one of the Apostles.[1] The torrents of apocryphal literature which the Gnostics were pouring forth, rendered it necessary that the Church should separate from the general stream those books which had always been regarded as Apostolic. At what precise date the Canon of the New Testament was definitely fixed we cannot accurately determine. It is certain, at any rate, that in the time of Irenæus the Canon was becoming firmly established.[2] Nevertheless, during the Montanist heresy alleged revelations were increasing. Every preacher of this sect believed himself divinely inspired. To protect the faithful against the machinations of these heretics, the principle was sanctioned of considering as inspired only such books as were written by the Apostles or with their direct approbation. In this way the Pastor of Hermas was excluded from the Canon, while the Epistle to the Hebrews was definitely admitted.[3] Towards the end of the fourth century the books of the Old and the New Testaments were definitely fixed, and the Canon, as later defined by the Council of Trent, was universally admitted.[4]

[1]Bardenhewer: *Patrology*, pp. 85 *et sqq.*

[2]Irenæus himself quotes from every book of the N.T. except the Ep. to Philemon and II Peter; he refuses to admit the authority of the Ep. to the Hebrews, although he makes use of it (*Adv. Haer.* II, 30-9; P.G. 7, col. 822), and he regards as inspired the Pastor of Hermas, and perhaps the Epistle of Clement.

[3]Tanquerey: *Theol. Dog.* I, p. 663.

[4]*Conc. Trid.* Sess. IV. *Vid.* Tanquerey, *op. cit.* pp. 663-664; Cavallera *Thesaurus*, nos. 37, 38 and 39, in which latter paragraph a complete list of the apocrypha is to be found.

The establishment of the Canon of Scripture prevented a recrudescence of heresies which were founded on an alleged revelation. Although this was certainly a decided gain to the Church, it was not sufficient, because new sects made their appearance, purporting to have the true Scriptures as the basis of their doctrines, whereas these latter were totally different from the traditional doctrines of the Church. If the unity of the Church was to be preserved it was necessary that there should be, also, a true interpretation of the Scriptures. At a very early date in the history of the Church it was seen that the advice of St. Peter[5] had not been given in vain. The Fathers readily admitted that there were in the Scriptures many things difficult to understand.[6] Scripture, however, is one of the sources of revelation. While certain passages may be obscure, they cannot be so interpreted as to contradict the doctrines which had been handed down, because tradition had existed before Scripture, and the whole of revelation had, most probably, been given orally before any portion had been written at all. This criterion of interpreting the Scriptures in the light of the already existing doctrines seems to have appealed to the Fathers from a very early date. Tertullian points out that in the study of the Scriptures, one ought not to lose sight of the rule of faith.[7] St. Augustine, after pointing out that the Scriptures are sometimes obscure, inquires as to the course of action to be taken by the exegete when confronted with this difficulty. In reply, he tells him to consult the rule of faith learned from the clearer passages of Scripture and from the authority of

[5]II *Peter* 3-16.

[6]St. Irenæus *Adv. Haer.* L. II, cap. 48, P.G. 7, coll. 804-12: Clem. Alex. *Stromata* VI-15, P.G. 9, col. 348; Aug. *De Doct. Christ,* L. III, c. II, n. 2, P.L. 34, col. 65.

[7]*De Praescrip.* chaps. 12, 14, P.L. 2, coll. 26, 27.

the Church.[8] St. Vincent of Lerins knows only two means of avoiding heresy: the authority of the divine Law and the tradition of the Catholic Church. The authority of Scripture alone he considers insufficient, unless there is added to it the traditional interpretation.[9] The testimony of St. Vincent is important as showing the use of Scripture by the heretics of the early Church. Though referring only to the heresies which had occurred up to his time, his words are applicable to every heresy, and seem particularly adapted to describe the tactics of the sixteenth century reformers.

"Perhaps," he says, "someone may ask whether heretics also make use of Scripture. Certainly they do, and importunately. You may see them rush through every book of the Holy Law. . . . Among their own brethren or with others, in private and in public, in their discourses, in their treatises, in their entertainments, in the streets, they make scarcely any statement which they do not seek to explain by the words of Scripture. Read the little works of Paul of Samosata, or of Priscillian, or of Eunomius, or of Jovinian, or of any other of the disease-carriers; look at the infinite collection of extracts; there is scarcely a page which is not painted and coloured by passages from the New or the Old Testament. The more timorous and cautious they are, the more hiddenly do they conceal themselves behind the shadows of the divine law. They are well aware that, unadorned, their

[8]Aug. *De Doct. Christ. loc. cit.*

[9]Quia . . . Scripturam Sacram . . . non uno eodemque sensu universi accipiunt sed eiusdem eloquia aliter atque aliter alius atque alius interpretatur, ut pene quot homines sunt tot illius sententiæ erui posse videantur . . . idcirco multum necesse est . . . ut propheticae et apostolicæ interpretationis linea secundum ecclesiastici et catholici sensus normam dirigatur. In ipsa autem catholica Ecclesia magnopere curandum est ut id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est.—St. Vincent *Commonit*, c. 2, P.L. 50, coll. 640.

malodorous productions will be pleasing to no one, and hence they sprinkle them with the aroma of heavenly wisdom, so that, though one may be inclined to despise the human error, one cannot rightly spurn the oracle of God."[10]

From whatever source false doctrines might have arisen, or whatever end they might seek to attain, they could always find apparent confirmation in some text or texts of Scripture. The Subordinationists appealed to the testimony of Christ about His relations with the Father.[11] The Chiliasts appealed to numerous texts of the Apocalypse.[12] Passages from the same work of St. John gave rise to the peculiar theory of the Joachimites.[13] It is hardly necessary to mention the part played by Scripture in the heresy of Luther. The course of Protestantism is an adequate commentary on the instability of the principles on which it was based. While the Scriptures alone would give, at best, a very defective rule of faith, the addition of the principle of private judgment rendered impossible the establishment of any constant body of doctrines.

The excesses to which misinterpretation of Scripture gave rise made it plain that in order to be of assistance to the Catholic faith, the Scriptures ought to be interpreted according to the mind of the Church. In other words, exegesis must always proceed in accordance with the tradition of the Fathers. This principle was defined by the Council of Trent,[14] embodied in the Profession of Faith of Pope Pius IV,[15] reaffirmed by the Vatican

[10] *Commonit.* ch. 25.
[11] *John*, 14.28.
[12] Cf. Allo. *L'Apocalypse*, p. 294 *et sqq.*
[13] Vid. Lépicier, *De Stab. et Prog. Dogmatum*, pp. 72, 73.
[14] Session IV anno. 1546, Cavallera, *Thesaurus*, 41.
[15] Cavallera, 43.

Council,[16] and renewed by Pope Leo on the occasion of the publication of the Encyclical "Providentissimus Deus" in 1893.

Since the Scriptures have been twisted so as to be detrimental to the doctrines of the Church, how can they be said to assist in doctrinal development? The science of exegesis contributes to the progress of dogma (1) by disproving heretical contentions, (2) by exhibiting proofs from Scripture for the various dogmas or at least by showing that a particular truth is in conformity with the written testimony.

The dogmas of Christianity are not founded merely on one text of the Scriptures. If, therefore, some text is found which is in apparent contradiction to the accepted teaching, it must be capable of being interpreted in accordance with that teaching, since truth cannot be opposed to truth, and the Scriptures and tradition have both come from the same source. Hence, in the early Church it was the duty of exegesis to point out that the text on which Subordinationists based so many arguments was not really opposed to the Catholic teaching,[17] that this text meant simply that Christ as man was inferior to the Father, inasmuch as human nature is essentially inferior to the divine. Similarly the exponents of the Scriptures had to show that not all of the Sacred Text could be interpreted literally, nor could all be taken allegorically.[18] The effects of a too rigid literalism are seen in the results of the Antioch school of exegesis, which resulted in making the Scriptures scarcely more

[16] *De Fide*, cap. 2, Cavallera, 42.

[17] *John*, 14.28. *Vide* Augustine *In Joannis Evang. Tract* 78, Migne P.L. 35, coll. 1,835-1,836.

[18] Cf. St. Jerome's rebuke to those who literally interpreted *Matthew* 19-29, and thought that in the next life they would receive a hundred-fold everything they abandoned in this life; Jerome, *Lib.* 3 *in Matt.* cap. 19, *Breviarium, Commune Abbatum, Lect.* IX.

than a human book.[19] On the other hand, the extreme tendency of Origen towards allegorical interpretation led him to deny the historicity of passages, which he considered to have only a spiritual sense.[20] The leaning towards the spiritual understanding of the Bible is common among all the Fathers, except those immediately under the influence of the School of Antioch.[21] Jerome devotes his attention to the literal sense, but without prejudice to the typical interpretation. In fact, in at least one instance he becomes frankly allegorical.[22] The proof of Catholic doctrines against false opinions thus caused a more detailed examination of the Scriptures, and the latter, in turn, resulted in a more lucid explanation of the truths which had been called into question.

And just as heretics try to overthrow the orthodox doctrines of the Church by deducing from Scriptural texts conclusions at variance with her teaching, science sometimes boasts that her findings have definitely falsified Scripture and the consequent Catholic teaching. The case of Galileo is frequently adduced as proof that the Church had to change her doctrine. This is, however, altogether untrue. Certain theologians at the time, in fact the majority of theologians, did consider that the old Ptolemaic system was more in accordance with the statements of Scripture, but when the Copernican

[19]Art. *Exégèse*. Dict. Apol. de la Foi. col. 1,825: Durand, S.J.

[20]*Ibid.* col. 1,823.

[21]*Vid. e.g.* Augustine, *Tract.* 17 *In Joann.*, P.L. 35, coll. 1,527-1,532.

[22]The passage referred to is from the Third Book of Kings, chap. I, *re* David and Abisag the Sunamitess. Jerome takes much trouble to show that it ought not to be taken literally. "Nonne tibi videtur si occidentem sequaris litteram vel figmentum esse de mimo vel Atellanarum ludicra?" He interprets the passage to mean that David was invigorated by the increased wisdom of old age; *Ep.* 52 (alias 2), P.L. 22, coll. 528 *et sqq.*

It is, however, well to note that in another place—*Adv. Jovin.* 1-24, P.L. 23, col. 243—he interprets this same passage literally.

theory was properly explained, it was seen that there was no contradiction between faith and science.[23] The Catholic exegete can always rely on the principle that there can be no discordance between any certain conclusion of science and any defined doctrine. Cases may arise in which the harmony will not be obvious, but with the aid of some further analysis the agreement of results will become manifest. It can never happen that there is a real contradiction between an *ex-cathedra* interpretation of Scripture and an unquestionable scientific truth. In fact, the dogmatic definitions of the Church often correct the conclusions of science and philosophy.

But the real end of Scriptural exegesis is to show that Catholic doctrines are guaranteed by revelation. To show the usefulness of exegesis in proving the various dogmas, nothing more is required than a reference to any text-book of dogmatic theology. There is scarcely a proposition advanced which is not supported by the evidence of the Old or New Testament. It is, however, worthy of note that St. Thomas seldom makes use of Scriptural texts in the arguments which he proposes. When he does use the Scriptures, it is rather to re-state his answer in a Scriptural formula. His mode of action does not imply that he had no regard for the probative force of the Scriptures, but really he seems to take for granted what we are now accustomed to call " proofs from Scripture."

Section IV.—Patrology.

The whole deposit of revealed truth is not contained in Sacred Scripture. The greater portion of the deposit was communicated orally, and was not consigned to

[23] *Vid.* Ward: *Problems and Persons,* Unchanging Dogma and Changeful Man.

writing during the Apostolic period. This oral tradition is to be found chiefly in the works of the Fathers. It is, therefore, scarcely necessary to emphasise the importance of the study of these works as a factor in doctrinal development. When the defenders of the faith wrote in support of the revealed truths their aim was not merely to show that the heretical contention was false. Something positive was always contributed to the clearer understanding of the doctrines in question. It might happen, however, that in the heat of argument a writer otherwise orthodox could overstep the limits assigned by tradition to such an extent as to fall into error on the other extreme. For example, the reaction against Nestorianism resulted in the error of the Monophysites. But the writings of the Fathers are, in general, characterised by a tendency to moderation in positive teaching, while, at the same time, they demonstrate in no uncertain language the essential opposition between the doctrines of Tradition and the errors of heretics.

The chief advantage, then, of patristic study from one point of view lies in the fact that the Fathers are faithful witnesses of tradition. In their works they may touch upon some aspect of dogma which had hitherto been unnoticed, or, again, a truth which was later expressed in a precise formula may be found implicitly contained in the principles from which they started. The fact that a doctrine is not expressly stated is no indication that it did not form part of the revealed deposit. A dogma may be even explicitly believed long before there is any precise formula defined in which the truth is adequately expressed. For example, it was explicitly believed that Christ was both God and Man before the Council of Ephesus defined exactly in what sense He participated in the two natures. Similarly, the doctrine

of Transubstantiation was universally received from the very beginning, although the terminology which set forth the doctrine most accurately was evolved only in the twelfth century.[1]

In appealing to the authority of the Fathers in support of doctrines, modern theologians are merely following the lead given by the Council of Ephesus in 431. Before vindicating the Catholic teaching against the heresy of Nestorius, the opinions of various Fathers were examined, and the evidence was all in favour of the doctrine as proposed more precisely by Cyril. The argument from the Fathers was, therefore, a very important factor in proof of the doctrine which the Council was about to define.[2] The influence of the patristic argument became even greater in the subsequent Councils, especially in the Tridentine and Vatican. While the authority of the Fathers was introduced somewhat accidentally at Ephesus, at the two last it was made the supreme test of the doctrines to be defined.

It is a matter for the student of Patrology to show the authority of a particular Father in regard to a particular doctrine or opinion which has taken shape since the end of the patristic period. In estimating the value of the testimony advanced by any Father, care must be taken to see whether in the circumstances he was interpreting tradition or giving merely his own opinion.[3] Again, a conclusion regarding a dogma which is considered *ex professo*, is more valuable than an opinion proposed incidentally when the writer is treating of something

[1]For the patristic history of this dogma, cf. Dr. Coghlan, *De SS. Euch.*, pp. 165-264.

[2]Mansi: *Concilia*, Vol. 4, coll. 1,183-1,211; Harduin: *Collectio Conciliorum*, Vol. 1, coll. 1,399-1,419.

[3]As, for example, when Augustine proposes, as a pious opinion, his theory of the multiplicity of the literal senses of Scripture Dict. Apol. de la Foi, art. *Exégèse*, col. 1,827.

else. Due regard must also be paid to the particular characteristics of each writer, and to the circumstances in which he wrote. The writings of the impetuous Tertullian even while he belonged to the Church are of less weight than those of the more moderate Athanasius; while one cannot expect the same reasoned calmness in a polemical writer as one would find in an ordinary modern theological treatise. Furthermore, the opinions of an individual are much more important if the same views are extensively shared by his contemporaries, and this importance is enhanced if the writers are so widely separated that borrowing is morally impossible.

In brief, to do full justice to the writings of the Fathers the student must try to put himself in the circumstances in which the individual Father wrote;[4] he must take cognisance of his temperament, and have a thorough knowledge of all his works. It is not sufficient to defend a new aspect of dogma by means of a few texts taken from a solitary book, because very often the Fathers in their more mature years corrected opinions which they formerly maintained.

[4]Cf. Moran: *Government of the Ch. in 1st Cent.*, p. 250.

CHAPTER VII

Causes of Doctrinal Progress in the Middle Ages

FROM the time of Augustine until the revival of learning in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there was scarcely any progress in dogma. The existence of Semi-Pelagianism and Adoptionism shows that there was still some interest taken in doctrinal questions, but compared with the first five centuries, the period from the sixth to the twelfth century is sterile. The only cause of progress in operation is the piety of the faithful; and, though important from some standpoints popular devotion can effect very small development in dogma, unless it is supported by doctrinal experts.

Section I.—General Conspectus of Causes Operating During the Period.

The Middle Ages produced the experts whose advent had been so eagerly awaited. With the Crusades, and the increased intercourse between the East and the West, the founding of the Mendicant Orders, the rise of Universities, and, finally, the Scholastic movement, a new era was opened in the history of theology, and new causes became active in the development of doctrine.[1]

One of the results of the Universities was to equip a body of men with everything necessary for the successful

[1]De Wulf: *History of Medieval Philosophy*, Eng. Trans. by Dr. Coffey, pp. 243-263.

defence of the doctrines of revelation. Hitherto the treatises on dogmatic subjects were written either from the apologetic or the polemic standpoint. No really scientific treatment of the whole range of dogma had yet been attempted. With the setting up of these centres of learning, students flocked to the university towns. The free interchange of opinions tended to give men a wider outlook on all subjects. A marked development took place in every science. In the earlier stages no university claimed to cover the whole field of knowledge; each gained fame in a particular subject through the presence of some renowned teacher. From the very beginning the University of Paris was distinguished for theology.[2] From it went forth in 1257 A.D. two distinguished Religious who were destined to bring about a momentous development, both in theology and in doctrine, St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure.

Another result of the University training was to foster the spirit of enquiry. Indeed in the early Scholastic period we find opinions put forward which resemble very much the rationalistic theses proposed by the heretics of the early Church. This desire for knowledge can hardly be considered as a result of the rise of Universities. It was one of the characteristics of the times. Yet one is forced to admit that it was powerfully stimulated by the increased facilities for education. In order to safeguard the doctrines of the Church from the attacks of this incipient Rationalism, the truths of revelation were reduced to a definite system on a scientific and rational basis. The primary object of the Scholastics was to preserve the old doctrines by showing that they were in perfect conformity with human reason. To the result of their labours is due the evolution of theology as a

[2]De Wulf: *op. cit.*, pp. 254, 255.

science with its own principles and its own rules. But long before their day, efforts had been made to synthesise dogma into an organic whole. This tendency is visible in Irenæus,[3] and in Clement of Alexandria.[4] Origen, in his " De Principiis," attempted to systematise the principal dogmas;[5] similarly Augustine, in his " Enchiridion," and " De Fide ";[6] while in the eighth century, St. John Damascene made a noteworthy attempt to classify the teachings of the Greek Fathers.[7] Though the germ of scientific theology is apparent from the early patristic age, it did not develop fully until the period beginning with the twelfth century. The first complete systematic works are the Books of the Sentences, and of these, that of Peter Lombard is by far the most important. As a text-book of theology, the " Sentences " of Peter Lombard continued to be used up to the sixteenth century, and was commented on by every theologian of note. Just as the Books of the Sentences were a decided advance on any previous attempts at theology, both in the field covered and in method, so were the " Summæ," for which the thirteenth century was and is famous.

The aim of the early Scholastics was to preserve the traditions of the Fathers, that of the Summists was to preserve and to develop. The Books of Sentences were chiefly collections of texts from the writings of the Fathers to which were added the explanations and speculations of the compiler. The Summists went a step further, and while giving due respect to patristic authority, they concentrated their attention on defending the revealed

[3] *Adv. Haer.*, Lib. III-IV, Migne P.G. 7.
[4] P.G., 8,9, 10.
[5] P.G., 11.
[6] P.L., 40.
[7] *De Fide Orthodoxa*, P.G., 94.

truths by arguments from reason, or philosophy, or the natural sciences in so far as the latter were known at the time. The dialectic method of argumentation introduced by the Scholastics was undoubtedly responsible for the clearness and precision with which doctrines were explained, opinions advanced, or conclusions deduced. By means of this method the good and bad points in any theory were quickly brought to light. But this dialectic method was not the only novelty introduced by the Scholastics. Another and a more potent cause of theological development is to be found in the introduction of the genuine works of Aristotle.

It is not to be supposed that the philosophical system of Aristotle was unknown to the Fathers. Most of them seem to be acquainted with it, but owing to its being used by heretics it found no favour in orthodox circles. In the sixth century, however, we find Leontius of Byzantium employing the Categories of Aristotle to show the perfect conformity which exists between the decisions of Ephesus and those of Chalcedon regarding the person and natures of Christ.[8] Nevertheless, it is true that this philosophy remained practically untouched until the Middle Ages. What Plato was to the Fathers Aristotle was to the Scholastics. In fact, so highly was the latter esteemed that he was known as "The Philosopher."

But the works of Aristotle were not introduced into the theological schools without a struggle. To begin with, there was a long-standing prejudice against them, and secondly, when they were first brought under the notice of theologians they were interpolated with the false speculations of the Arabian Neo-Platonists. Though it

[8]Tixeront: *Histoire des Dogmes* III, p. 152 *et seq*; Otten, *History of Dogmas* I, p. 440, 441.

may cause one surprise in the twentieth century to discover that the most of Aristotle's works were banned by the Church in the thirteenth, yet the circumstances of the time make it clear that the Church was acting prudently. To be accurate, the original works of Aristotle were never condemned, but certain treatises which masqueraded as the genuine philosophy of Aristotle were not allowed to be used as text-books until they were corrected.[9] The vigorous attitude adopted by the Synod of Paris in 1210 was modified by Gregory IX in 1231, when it was shown that the real works of Aristotle contained no such doctrines as had been found incorporated in the versions obtained through the Arabians.[10]

The philosophy of Aristotle having been shown to contain nothing essentially heterodox, doctrinal development went on apace, and the Scholastic period became the Golden Age of Theology. The theologians of the thirteenth century were characterised by an extraordinary depth of thought, keeness of intellect, and precision in terminology. The rise of theology as a science was rapid, and it may be said to have reached its zenith in the work of St. Thomas. Later theological development took a new turn, namely, the breaking up of theology into several parts and the specialised treatment of these different sections. For example, at the present time dogmatic theology and moral theology are two distinct sciences, although in the Scholastic period all the various aspects of theology were grouped together.

Development of doctrine is, however, distinct from development of the science of theology. The history of

[9]Cath. Encycl., Vol. 14: Art. *Theology*, p. 590; Otten, *History of Dogmas* II, pp. 12, 13.

[10]De Wulf, *op. cit.*, pp. 251 *et sqq.* This author gives an excellent treatment of the sources of the philosophical renaissance, pp. 243, 253.

dogmas is a clear indication that the period of greatest doctrinal development contained no theology strictly so called. As a matter of fact, the evolution of dogma is one of the fundamental causes of the science of theology. And, furthermore, since theology and doctrine are not co-extensive, progress in theology need not and does not imply a corresponding progress in doctrine. In order to make our meaning clear it is necessary to note that all development of doctrine must remain absolutely within the scope of the truths of revelation. Once a result is reached which is not contained at least implicitly in either Scripture or tradition, that result is not a development of doctrine. It may be very closely connected with doctrine; a denial of the conclusion may be approximate to heresy; but it is not a part of revelation, and therefore not a truth which can be believed on the divine authority. Such a conclusion may, however, be a perfectly legitimate development of theology. In other words, while theology covers the whole field of revealed teaching it does not limit itself to that alone, but goes beyond it to protect its confines. Theology can rightly claim as its own, conclusions obtained through the medium of a truth which is known only on the authority of human reason; doctrine, in its various stages of development may be aided by reason, but the actual development, that is, the positive result, is not arrived at by the incorporation of any natural truths.

Section II.—The Sacramentary Doctrine.

Though theological progress is by no means identical with doctrinal development, we find both in conjunction during the Scholastic period. Before considering the precise contribution of Scholasticism to doctrinal development, it is necessary to point out that certain

portions of revelation had been very carefully examined by the early Fathers. Those questions relating to God and to the God-man had been elaborated in the course of the Trinitarian and Christological controversies. Augustine had exhaustively treated the subject of grace. But there was heretofore no scientific attempt to catalogue the various channels by which grace flowed from God to man. The teaching regarding the Sacraments was to be found here and there in the writings of the Fathers. The constant practice of the Church is sufficient evidence of the existence and efficacy of the Sacraments from the beginning, yet apart from the practice, the teaching on this subject was very vague.

The fact that none of the early heresies were intimately or immediately concerned with the Sacraments in general explains to some extent why efforts had not been made to classify the teaching on the Sacraments. It is true that the Montanists erred regarding Penance, and the Donatists maintained that the sacramental efficacy was dependent on the subjective dispositions of the minister,[1] but neither error pertained to more than the fringe of the traditional doctrines. The difficulty of defining a Sacrament was another cause of retarded development The concept of sacramental symbolism was noted from the beginning, but centuries had to elapse before it was adequately appreciated and expressed in a precise definition.

The two causes which are most obvious in the development of the Sacraments are the practice of the faithful and the use of concepts borrowed from philosophy. The purpose of liturgical rites was somehow or another to give Christians the strength necessary to adhere to their religion and overcome tempta-

[1]Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, p. 426.

tions. It was only natural, therefore, to regard the ceremony as in some way symbolic of the effect which was produced. The Greeks spoke of these ceremonies as " mysteria," implying that the visible rite had some invisible significance. Tertullian, the first Latin writer to use the term " sacramentum " had in mind this symbolic quality, though he did not discuss it.

The theory of the sign was taken over from the philosophical speculations of the Alexandrian School. Augustine, in the " De Doctrina Christiana," treated at some length of the idea of the " sign " and the " thing signified." This theory he applied to the Sacraments.[2] By its means, Augustine was enabled to describe a Sacrament as a sacred sign, or the sign of a sacred thing. He does not state the exact relations between the two terms. His definition was too general, with the result that numerous other rites were brought under the category of Sacraments, but it was a decided improvement on the " mysterium " of the Greeks. Nevertheless it was not sufficiently exact to make for any real progress, and development was further retarded by the theories of Isidore of Seville,[3] who reverted to the pre-Augustine view that a Sacrament was not a " sign " but a " secret." Certain things are called Sacraments, he held, because under them is hidden the action of the Holy Ghost. By this theory not only were rites of all kinds included under the term Sacrament, but even the mysteries of Faith.[4] From the seventh to the eleventh

[2]*Vide* Pourrat, *Theology of the Sacraments*, Eng. Trans, 1910; pp. 23, 24. The author, after stating that Augustine was indebted to the Alexandrians, goes on to say " here we see what services philosophy may render to dogma by supplying ecclesiastical writers with concepts that may help them to express with more precision the traditional doctrines."

[3]Pourrat, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

[4]Pourrat, *loc. cit.*

century ecclesiastical writers seem to have followed the opinions of Isidore, but in the twelfth century the Augustinian formula was reinstated. For Abelard a Sacrament is a visible sign of the invisible grace of God.[5] The exact relation of the " sign " to the " thing signified " is still vague. Here again philosophy was brought to the assistance of dogma. Peter Lombard explained the relation as one of cause. How precisely the Sacraments cause grace is a question for theology. The point of immediate interest is that they *are* efficacious signs of grace—they effect what they signify. This concept of causality was of immense importance for the work of defining the exact number of the Sacraments and of separating them from the sacramentals. Before the time of Peter Lombard a distinction had been introduced between the " greater " Sacraments and the others, but this was not nearly so scientific as the theory advanced by the Master of the Sentences.

The view of the Lombard was taken up by other Scholastics, and various aspects of the sacramentary doctrine were subjected to critical examination. The teaching concerning the character which was impressed by some of the Sacraments, was developed and made precise. Again the Aristotelian theory of matter and form as the constituents of all bodies was transferred to the Sacraments, and was shown to be more scientific than the " res " and " verba " which had hitherto been considered as the component parts of the external rite.

Practically every aspect of sacramental theology was treated by the Scholastics. It only required a heresy to show how much of their speculations was genuine doctrine and how much theological opinion. The rise of Protestantism and the consequent convocation of an

[5] *Introd. ad Theol.*, Lib. I. 2; Migne P.L., 178; col. 984.

Ecumenical Council brought into clearer relief the doctrine of the Church on this matter. Furthermore these two events stimulated the minds of Catholic scholars to further research, because it became necessary to prove that the Church had in no way changed her doctrines. To this cause we may trace the rise of that branch of theology which may be called historical. The value of appealing to the tradition as handed down by the Fathers was found to be a valuable asset in disproving the theories of the Reformers and in grounding the orthodox teaching. The work which was undertaken with success by Morinus has been further developed in the present century, as is testified by valuable monographs as well as by numerous Histories of Dogma.

Section III.—Original Sin and the Immaculate Conception.

To commence with a thoroughly precise definition was characteristic of the Schoolmen. The theological discussions carried out by the various scholars in the Middle Ages necessitated this accuracy. If a definition could not stand the test of argument it was set aside. We have seen the importance of an exact definition of a Sacrament, and how it benefited the cause of doctrinal development. Let us now examine the Scholastic definition of original sin in relation to the Immaculate Conception, because, although the latter doctrine was defined only in the nineteenth century, its development is the result of the methods of the Middle Ages.

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is usually made the occasion for accusing the Church of having added to the revealed deposit. We have already referred (p. 26) to the charge made by Dr. Gore, when he says that Catholics require a theory of development which will take account of positive increase in doctrine " The

doctrine of the Immaculate Conception," he continues, " was not believed in the early Church." It may be conceded that the doctrine exactly as defined by Pope Pius IX was not explicitly contained in any of the early Creeds, but that is far from conceding that it was in no way present to the faithful before the nineteenth century. Pius IX did no more than set his seal on a truth which had already been believed by the Church. The expression of that belief was not always given in the exact technical terminology we now find in theological hand-books, but the belief existed nevertheless.

From the foundation of the Church it had been the constant tradition that Mary had been singularly privileged. The Gospels speak of her as full of grace. The early writers speak of her as the sinless Virgin. We do not know exactly the extent of the devotion to Mary prior to the Council of Ephesus, but we do know that her Divine Motherhood and her close relation to Christ in the work of Redemption were universally believed.[1] That there was some special devotion to Mary prior to 431 may be safely concluded from the numerous eulogies of the Virgin which are to be found from the beginning of the fifth century. In fact, in the fourth century Epiphanius tells us of a sect, the Collyridians, which worshipped Mary as a goddess.[2] St. Ephrem considers her as absolutely sinless, and compares her sanctity to that of her Son.[3] The testimony throughout expresses the general belief that Mary has some peculiar graces which are not shared by the other children of Eve. East and West are united in defending her singular prerogatives. Christian faith, aided by

[1] *Vid.* Armellini, *Notizie Storiche intorna alla Antichità del Culto di Maria Vergine*, chap. 1. Rome, 1888.

[2] *Haereses*, ch. 79, Migne, P.G., 42; coll. 739 *et sqq.*

[3] S. Ephraemi opera, pp. 541-544. Edited by Vossio, Antwerp, 1619.

Christian practice, is surely developing in the direction of an explicit avowal of her Immaculate Conception, when further progress is suspended by Augustine's theory of original sin. If original sin is defined as concupiscence, and if human nature is essentially vitiated by Adam's fall, then there is no possibility of escaping original sin. To be born of Adam is to participate in his sin. Exemption from original sin could be claimed only on the ground of virginal birth, because, according to Augustine, parents transmit it in the generation of offspring. Yet, notwithstanding his principles, Augustine scruples at including the Blessed Virgin. He certainly holds that she is free from actual sin, but from his definition it is difficult to see how he could possibly exempt her from original sin.[4]

Augustine's view of original sin being consistently held until the Scholastic period was an effective barrier to any further theological development. Yet all the time the faithful continued their veneration. Feasts were celebrated in her honour—even a feast of her Conception,[5] churches were dedicated to her,[6] and finally,

[4] " Everyone who is born *de concubitu*, inherits sin, hence, only one who is born otherwise, is stainless." *De Nupt. et Concup.* 1-13 ; P.L., 44; col. 421; " He alone, who remaining God, became man, never incurred any sin, although *de materna carne peccati*. *De Peccat et Meritis*, 2.38; P.L., 44; col. 174.

In the " *Opus Imperfectum*," 4-122, P.L., 45, col. 1,418, he refuses to hold that the ordinary conditions of birth apply to Mary. He says, " Non transcribimus diabolo Mariam conditione nascendi ; sed ideo, quia ipsa conditio solvitur gratia renascendi."

And in the "*De Natura et Gratia*," cap. 36, Augustine is more explicit regarding the absolute sinlessness of Mary. "None of the saints," he says, " is without sin . . . except the holy Virgin Mary, concerning whom . . . I do not wish anything to be said when there is question of sin. For how can we know the superabundance of graces conferred on her to overcome all sin, who merited to conceive and bring forth Sanctity Itself."—This passage approaches closely to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

[5] *Vide* Vacandard, *Études* III, pp., 215 *et sqq*.

[6] *Ibid*. 116.

early in the twelfth century, the opinion was gaining ground that she had not contracted original sin. This view gradually spread and was defended, although the weight of theological opinion was not in its favour.

Matters had arrived at this stage when Scholasticism appeared. The first real step in the development of the doctrine from the theological point of view is the theory advanced by Anselm regarding original sin. He proves that concupiscence cannot be a sin, and therefore it is not original sin. For him original sin consists in the privation of original justice. Although Anselm does not seem to have considered the state of original justice as synonymous with that of habitual grace, his theory is, at any rate, a definite break with the Augustinian view.[7] This opinion of Anselm was not received on the Continent until the thirteenth century. Alexander of Hales is one of its first defenders in the University of Paris, yet he has difficulties as to the possibility of an immaculate conception. Ignorance of the conditions of the pre-natal life of the human organism is the cause of some of the various theories current at the time. Alexander, for example, holds that the human soul is not infused into the fœtus until after a comparatively long period, and the body cannot be sanctified before animation; yet he holds, somewhat illogically, that it is capable of contracting original sin. The Traducianism of Augustine seems still to be exerting considerable influence.[8] Even St. Thomas introduces concupiscence as the material object of original sin.[9] He, nevertheless, holds that the body does not contract original sin apart from the soul.

[7] *Vid.* Toner: *De Lapsu et Peccato Originali*, p. 79 *et sqq*: Dublin, 1904.

[8] Alexander of Hales, *Universae Theologiae Summa*, pars. III, quaest IX, membr. 2, art. 1-3.

[9] *Summa*, 1, 2, 82, 3.

Before the infusion of the human soul there is no sin.[10] He is not, however, in favour of the theory of the Immaculate Conception. His principal objection—apart from the fact that he considers the opinion a somewhat dangerous novelty—is that if the theory is true, Mary did not need Redemption, and Christ came to redeem all.[11]

Notwithstanding the opposition of theologians, the faithful continued their devotion, and venerated Mary as the Immaculate Conception. St. Bonaventure seems in favour of the doctrine, but the difficulties appear to him insuperable. William of Ware is the first to defend the doctrine in a thoroughly scientific fashion. He says that in the matter of devotion to the Blessed Virgin he prefers to err by excess rather than by defect. He affirms the possibility of being conceived immaculate by saying that the stain of original sin is a morbid quality, and God could, if he wished, preserve Mary from it. Moreover, it is becoming that the Mother of God should be exempted, because as the Mother of God she ought to be all pure.[12] The same line of argument was afterwards adopted by Duns Scotus, the disciple of William. Scotus publicly defended the doctrine, and replied to the various objections. Whether it may be attributed to his eloquence or not, the view as advocated by Scotus became in a short time the approved opinion of the

[10] *Summa* 3, 27, 2.

[11] *Summa*, 3, 27, 2 ad. 2; *In Sent.* III, Dist. III. *q.* 1, art. 1, sol. 2; cf. *Summa*, 3, 14, 3 ad. 1, where St. Thomas states definitely that the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin : " *Caro Virginis concepta fuit in originali peccato.*" The controversies which centred around sanctification before animation and after animation were due to a defective knowledge of embryology—a striking instance of the value of a natural science even for theology. It is strange that the Scholastics never thought of the simultaneous infusion and sanctification of the soul.

[12] Vacandard, *Études*. III, p. 281.

Paris University. The controversy continued during the whole fourteenth century, but the opposition to the Immaculate Conception gradually became weaker.

Until the end of the fourteenth century the supreme authority of the Church took no part in the debates. The doctrine was developed by the devotion of the faithful and by the discussions of the theologians. In proof of the theory, arguments were used both from Scripture and from the writings of the Fathers, and the precise form of the arguments brings into relief the effects of an extensive training in philosophy. The Holy See was invoked in 1387 to settle a dispute between the University of Paris and a Dominican Friar, John of Montesono—the latter having proposed for defence a number of theses in which he maintained that the Blessed Virgin had contracted original sin. The Pope agreed with the University and the Bishop of Paris in condemning the theses, and finished by excommunicating their proposer.[13]

In the fifteenth century the teaching of the Paris University was generally accepted. Every aspect of the doctrine had been so thoroughly examined and discussed that the question of its definition came before the Fathers of the Council of Basle in 1431.[14] The official mind of the Church on the matter was manifested by Sixtus IV, who in 1476 approved of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, enriched it with numerous

[13]For history of this dispute, *vid.* Denifle, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, Vol. III, pp. 486 *et sqq.*, nos. 1,556, etc. Montesono was condemned and excommunicated by the Paris Univ., 6th July, and 23rd Aug., 1387 (no. 1,559). This sentence was ratified by the Pope, Jan. 27th, 1389 (no. 1,567); cf. Bened. XIV, *De Festis*, lib. 2, cap. 15, n. 6, p. 225. Edit, 1767.

[14]As a matter of fact, this Council, having become schismatical, after deposing Eugene IV, actually did " define " the doctrine, *vid.* Hardouin, *Concilia*, tom. 8, col. 1,266; Mansi, tom. 29, col. 182; Bened. XIV, *op. cit.*, n. 7, p. 226.

indulgences, and ordered a special Mass and Office in connection with the solemnity.[15] The Constitutions of Sixtus IV were duly ratified at the Council of Trent, which declared that the Blessed Virgin was not included in the decree regarding original sin.[16] In the century following the Council of Trent, Pope Alexander VII states the precise doctrine in almost the very terms of the definition of Pope Pius IX.[17]

It is scarcely more than the truth to say that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception owes most of its development to the method of theology current in the Middle Ages. Were it not for the Universities, the Religious Orders, and the Scholastic disputations, the doctrine might still be undefined and hidden away in tradition. But due regard must be had for the sense of the faithful as a cause of the progress of this dogma. Devotion to Mary, popular at first, soon becomes apparent in the liturgy of the Church in the number of Feasts celebrated in her name. She was felt to be singularly privileged during life and after death. Even before her birth she was the object of peculiar privileges as the Feast of her Conception testifies. She was certainly born without the stain of original sin, but at what precise time was she sanctified? To consider Mary in any close relation to sin of any kind was repugnant to the piety of the faithful; hence the belief that she never contracted even original sin.

The Scholastics then took up the doctrine from the scientific standpoint, and grave difficulties were seen against its dogmatic import. Considering how much the mediæval theologians were handicapped by the

[15]Constit. *Cum præencelsa*, 28th Feb., 1476; Constit. *Grave nimis*, 4th Sept., 1483; Cavallera, *Thes. Doct.*, nos., 803, 804.
[16]Cavallera, *op. cit.* 805.
[17]Cavellera, *op. cit.*, 806, 807.

vested interests of theological opinions universally received, and at the same time incorrect, and by their very scanty knowledge of the natural sciences, it is a great tribute to their ability that they were able to set aside the theories which were found to be unsuitable, and to evolve in their place explanations better qualified to explain the facts. The subtlety of the Scholastic reasoning is due partly to the complete mastery these theologians had of the philosophy of Aristotle, and partly to the necessity of publicly defending their views. The University training tended to sharpen the intellects of scholars, so that while they were quick to see the good points in a theory or an argument, they were equally expedite in discovering its shortcomings. This critical acumen was further developed by the syllogistic method of reasoning according to which the real point at issue was immediately brought to light and its relation to accepted truths manifested. In fact, so thorough was the work of the Scholastics that not only was it a development of all that had preceded, but it actually anticipated most of the subsequent erroneous opinions, and effectively disproved them.

CHAPTER VIII

Some Factors in Doctrinal Development in the Post-Tridentine Period

Section I.—*Theological Activity During this Period.*

FROM the fourteenth century Scholasticism was gradually declining. The great theologians of the earlier period had treated of nearly every aspect of doctrine which had been previously brought to light, and, furthermore, in their studies they had elucidated various implications of revelation hitherto unrecorded. Little was left to their immediate successors to be achieved, with the result that Scholasticism developed into a mere formalism, and ceased to command respect. Again the rise of the Humanist movement opened up a new field of intellectual activity. With the classic literature of Greece and Rome in their hands, men looked askance on what they called the " barbarous " Latinity of Scholastic theologians. Along with the revival of classical studies there arose a new philosophy, an exaggerated Rationalism, which continued and still exists.

Of the many results of this new philosophy the theories of Luther may be numbered as of the most importance for our subject. Not that Lutheranism was essentially a direct result of philosophy, but Luther was compelled by circumstances to adopt some arguments to support his teaching. The increasing emphasis on the powers

of the human mind gave him the support which he needed, and forthwith his theory of " private judgment " was given to the world.

The doctrines of Luther were published at a time when theological study was almost at a standstill. The spirit of Scholasticism had disappeared, and as yet no new movement had arisen to take its place. Nevertheless, even in Luther's time there were not wanting men of ability to defend the orthodox teaching, a fact which is clearly shown by the victory of Eck over Luther and Carlstadt in a public disputation in 1519. But the Reformation brought home to the ecclesiastical authorities the vital importance of a well-educated clergy to oppose the rising tide of heresy. The Roman Pontiffs set an example by founding and endowing numerous schools both in Rome and in other European cities, and from the end of the sixteenth century a marked development in theological study is apparent. The Humanist movement, in opening up the literary treasures of antiquity, had equipped scholars with a thorough knowledge of the Greek tongue, and had brought them to some extent into touch with the Eastern languages. In the study of Scripture, which the Reformation had rendered imperative for Catholic scholars, the knowledge of the languages in which the Bible was first composed was an immense help in the elucidation of various problems to which the new heresies had given rise. The literal interpretation of Scripture and the nature and extent of inspiration were the aspects most specially dealt with, and on the question of inspiration certain problems raised in the early Post-Tridentine period were solved only in 1870 by the Vatican Council.[1]

Besides a study of the Scriptures the Reformation

[1]Cavallera: *Thes. Doct.*, n. 30.

necessitated a close examination of the writings of the Fathers. The charge made by Luther that the Church had corrupted the teaching of Christ was disproved by the treatises of Morinus and Petavius, who show the continuity of Catholic doctrine from the Apostolic period until their own time. Their efforts were the means of bringing into existence a new branch of theology, whose object was to show the immutability of the revealed deposit, and the identity of Catholic doctrine with that deposit at each period in the history of the Church.

Scripture and tradition were the two great means used by Catholic theologians against the heretical teaching of the Reformers. The latter rejected tradition altogether —at least, in theory; in practice they were unable to reject it totally. Also they rejected the authority of the Church to interpret the Scriptures, transferring that right to the individual. Although all the points of the heretical teaching had been touched upon by the Council of Trent, much still remained for the theologians. They had the Catholic doctrines ably formulated in the conciliar definitions, but for purposes of controversy or instruction it was not sufficient to set down these decrees against the false opinions. New explanations of dogma were demanded, new proofs and new arguments. The Council of Trent had set its seal on the work of the Scholastics ; now, new Scholastics had to show that the decrees of Trent were in accordance with the revelation made by Christ. Yet it must be admitted that the Post-Tridentine period was characterised by stagnation rather than by doctrinal development. Few doctrines were defined, and of these the development cannot be considered as completely due to the efforts of Post-Tridentine theologians. Even the heresies which arose during the

period were sterile. Baianism occasioned no doctrinal development, neither did Jansenism, and the heresy of our own time, Modernism, promises to be equally barren.

Before passing to a consideration of the causes of the development of some of the doctrines recently defined, it might be of interest to examine the causes of the sterility of these heresies.

Baianism and Jansenism have much in common with Calvinism—all of them are characterised by a gloomy pessimism. The fall of Adam had vitiated human nature. Man is, therefore, irresistibly inclined to evil, has no natural good, and even with the aid of grace, is unable to observe all the Commandments.[2] Though not so superlative as Baianism, the doctrine of Jansenius had enough of the Calvinistic spirit to make impossible any development. It was both conservative and retrogressive. Its duration was due to its pseudo-asceticism and to certain historical causes. To the former cause may be attributed much of its influence, especially on the uneducated. The Sacrament of the Eucharist was always held in supreme veneration by the faithful. The Jansenist teaching regarding the reception of the Eucharist was supposed to be due to a desire to worship the Blessed Sacrament still more. The rigorist attitude no doubt appealed to many whom the other doctrines of Jansenism would have repelled. But Jansenism would have had a very short existence were it not for the anti-papal feeling of the times. Though repeatedly condemned by the Holy See,[3] the hostility between most of the European States prevented the condemnations taking immediate effect. It was discovered that several French Bishops were in sympathy with the Jansenist

[2]Cav., *op. cit.*, 895, 897, 898, 903, 906.
[3]*Vid.* Cav., *op. cit.*, nos. 903, 904, 905, 906.

teaching, and their attitude was undoubtedly an important factor in the far-reaching influence of Jansenism, an influence which may be traced even into the twentieth century.

But it may be asked why it gave rise to no doctrinal development. The answer seems to lie in the fact that it denied too much. Several of its tenets were directly opposed to the definitions of the Council of Trent. Secondly, in itself it was retrogressive. Its object was to return to the rigorism of the early centuries, a reaction due, most likely, to the moral laxity which followed the Reformation. Jansenism and Montanism had much in common, and both of them approximate more to the spirit of the Old Law than to that of the New Dispensation. Jansenists contended that man was fighting a losing battle, and with what must appear very bad logic, they restricted the reception of the Sacrament of the Eucharist—the greatest means of spiritual strength. It could occasion no doctrinal development, because it was itself too conservative and its teaching was too negative.

Section II.—Factors in the Development of the Doctrine of Papal Supremacy.

Amongst the few doctrines developed in the Post-Tridentine period, Papal Supremacy holds an important place.

This doctrine may be traced back even into the Apostolic period. Not so clear in the first and second centuries, it gradually manifests itself during the third and fourth, is considered more as a fact than as a doctrine until the fourteenth century, becomes from that time a subject for discussion, and finally is defined by the Vatican Council in 1870.

Although the doctrine is not explicit in the early centuries, the practice of the Church is sufficient evidence to prove that it was at least implied in the beliefs of the time. The Roman Pontiff always considered it his right and duty to watch the progress of the Church in every land, to give commands, to correct abuses; in short, he exercised supreme authority. The first example of the practice is the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians written about the end of the first century. At a later period the attitude of Callistus towards Montanists, that of Stephen to the Re-baptists, or that of Victor to the Quartodecimans may be taken as giving clear proof that the Bishop of Rome claimed universal jurisdiction, and that the whole Church admitted his claim. The few occasions on which the power of the Pope was set aside are so conspicuous as to appear immediately as exceptions to the general rule.

It was only at the time of the Great Western Schism that theories limiting the jurisdiction of the Pope began to be propounded. Owing to the confusion caused by the presence of three men, each claiming to be lawful Pope, it is little wonder that the views put forward by Gerson were widely held. Gerson, perhaps in an attempt to put an end to a position which was becoming a scandal, perhaps with the express intention of restricting the papal jurisdiction, propounded the theory that a General Council is superior to the Pope. As a temporary expedient, in view of the very peculiar circumstances of the time, the opinion had undoubtedly something to recommend it, and seemed to offer a simple solution of the problem. Though the schism was healed otherwise, the opinion of Gerson had taken root, and before long the number of appeals from the Pope to a future General Council became so large that the abuse was condemned

by Pius II in 1459.[1] The logical sequel of the view of Gerson is that the Pope has merely a primacy of honour.

But it was not until after the Reformation that it became clear that any restriction of Papal power would be disastrous to the unity of the Church. The Reformers introduced into their creed a new principle, the principle of Cæsarism, according to which the civil ruler was the head of the Church in the State. Needless to say, the new religion made a strong appeal to the monarchs of Europe by offering them full control in matters ecclesiastical. Certain of the Catholic rulers betrayed a deep anxiety to obtain a similar position in the Catholic Church, and the French king was the first to manifest his intentions. The relations between France and the Holy See had been for a long time unfriendly. As is usual in such cases, there were divisions among the French clergy; some were on the side of the Pope, and some favoured the King. Some of the French Bishops resented Papal interference in even ecclesiastical matters, holding that such interference was opposed to the liberties of the Gallican Church. These Bishops were supported by the King, who lost no chance to usurp the rights of the Holy See throughout the kingdom. Finally in 1681-1682, at a meeting of the French Bishops and clergy, the four Gallican articles were drawn up, and the Pope was excluded from any authority in the French Church. From being inferior to a General Council, the Pope is now made inferior to

[1]Pius, in the Bull, *Execrabilis*, writes: " Execrabilis et pristinis temporibus inauditus, tempestate nostra inolevit abusus, ut a Romano Pontifice . . . nonnulli, spiritu rebellionis imbuti . . . ad futurum Concilium provocare presumant. Volentes igitur hoc pestiferum virus a Christi Ecclesia procul pellere . . . huiusmodi provocationes damnamus et tanquam erroneas ac detestabiles reprobamus." Cf. Leo X, in the Bull, *Pastor æternus*, in 1516.

a National Council. His authority is restricted to his own territory. The Catholic Church becomes a collection of national churches, but there is no real centre of unity—it is Catholic only in name.

Although the Gallicans did not become schismatic for a time the position of the French Church gave great anxiety to the Holy See. By the aid of palliatives the crisis was passed, but it became evident that the exact status of the Roman Pontiff, both in relation to a General Council and to the Church in the various nations, would have to be definitely decided. In the meantime, theologians and canonists were engaged with the problem. The Scriptures were laid under contribution; the writings of the Fathers were quoted by the opposing scholars.[2] The history of the relations between the Holy See and the Bishops of the world, whether individually or assembled in council, was minutely examined, and as a result of generations of controversy, the Vatican Council was enabled to define as of Catholic faith the doctrine of the Supremacy of the Pope.[3]

The decision of the Vatican Council shows a great development in this doctrine. There is no longer any obscurity. The power of the Pope is presented in unequivocal language. He has not merely the duty of inspection and direction, but the supreme power of jurisdiction over the whole Church, in matters of faith and morals, and even of discipline. Though wanting in this clearness of conception, the doctrine of papal supremacy was believed in every age of the Church, and was exercised by the Popes, even when it was being most assailed. The error of the Gallicans brought it

[2]*Vid.* Murray: *Tract. de Eccl. Christi*, Vol. III, Disp. 20, Sect. 2, pp. 749-777; Hurter: *Theol. Dogmat. Comp. Tract.* 3, pars. 2, chaps. 3 and 4, pp, 426-439; 11th Edition, 1909.

[3]Denz-Bann, 12th Ed., n. 1831; Cav. *Thes. Doct.*, n. 324.

into prominence, and necessitated a close examination of the sources of revelation, so as to prove that the doctrine was guaranteed by the revealed teaching. Yet it cannot be said that the decree of the Vatican Council added anything to the deposit of faith. It merely set its seal on a doctrine which had been believed from the beginning of the Church, but which had not hitherto been neatly expressed or authoritatively defined.

Closely allied to the doctrine of Papal Supremacy is the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. The same causes, proximate and remote, and the same occasions, led to its definition. Primacy and Infallibility are so interrelated that the presence of one of them implies the presence of the other, and the denial of one leads to a denial of the other. Both these doctrines owed much to the study of historical theology, which proved beyond any doubt that they were accepted at least implicitly by the faithful in every century and throughout the whole Catholic world.

CHAPTER IX

Heresies as Factors in Doctrinal Development

THE importance of theological discussions as factors in doctrinal development is seen from the progress in dogma which took place in the Scholastic period. Argument brings out the strong and the weak points of opposing theories. The domestic contentions of the Middle Ages were, however, directly causes of doctrinal development; their immediate object was to elucidate some problem which had been hitherto obscure. But neither of the contending parties could be said to contradict any doctrine which the Church had regarded as revealed, and if it was clearly shown that the conclusions arrived at by one party endangered the defined teaching, these conclusions were submitted without demur to the judgment of the Church. It is precisely because of the failure to yield to the ruling of the Church that what was an opinion merely, often becomes a formal heresy.

Those who afterwards become heretics were not subjectively so from the beginning. For a time, probably even for a long period, they are honest in their opinion. When their error was pointed out to them, they refused to see that they were wrong. No doubt they might have had, in their own estimation, a good case. The fact that the Christian doctrines have had their foundation in a sphere superior to human reason, the obscurity of certain

passages of Scripture, the difficulty of seeing the exact import of a particular doctrine, all these leave room for the human mind to err. And when there is added the pride inherent in everyone, and the love of one's own opinion, we have all that is required for heresy. Only truly great men publicly admit that they made mistakes. St. Augustine confesses that he erred,[1] so did St. Thomas.[2] But ordinarily, when one's opinions have taken definite shape, they remain for good or ill, and this is especially true if one has been obliged to defend the views which he has put forward.

Section I.—Reasons for the Influence of Heresies.

The initial stages of heresy may be traced to the attempt to explain either a doctrine or some obscurity connected with a doctrine. It rarely happens that one denies a revealed truth merely for the sake of giving trouble, though Luther did his utmost to deny the doctrine of the Real Presence simply to annoy the Holy See, and desisted only because he had to admit that the textual evidence was too strong against him.[3] Ordinarily, however, the hypothesis advanced represents, in the beginning, a genuine effort to overcome a real difficulty.

[1] *Retractations.*

[2] *Summa*, 3, 12, 2, corp. art.

[3] Luther's state of mind is manifested in the *Epist ad. Argent.*, quoted by Dr. Coghlan, *De SS. Euch.*, Q. 3, a. 1, p. 47 : " Hoc diffiteri non possum nec volo," ait " quod si Carlostadius aut alius quispiam ante quinquennium mihi persuadere potuisset, in sacramento praeter panem et vinum esse nihil, ille *magno me beneficio sibi devinctum reddidisset. Gravibus enim curis anxius, et in hac aiscutienda materia multum desudans, omnibus nervis extensis, me extricare et expedire conatus sum*, cum ipse perspiciebam, *hac re papatui, in primis me valde incommodare posse.* Verum ego me captum video nulla evadendi via relicta est; textus enim Evangelii nimium apertus est et patens, qui facile convelli non potest."

During the discussion which inevitably ensues, the theory is forced to its logical conclusions, and these are seen to conflict absolutely with the received teaching. If the hypothesis is not then withdrawn, its adherents are regarded as heretics.

Although opposition between schools of thought within the Church gives a great impetus to doctrinal development, this influence is even further increased when one of the parties definitely cuts itself off from the Church, and attacks the latter from without. In this case, development is more urgently demanded. An adequate and orthodox explanation of the problem in question must be sought immediately, because the very existence of a truth is at stake. Heresy, therefore—and by heresy is meant here and throughout the chapter an erroneous opinion in matters relating to faith whether that opinion has yet been formally condemned by the Church or not—has this result: it opens up new ground; it concentrates the attention of opponents on an aspect of revelation which has been hitherto untouched. It thus drives defenders of orthodoxy to evolve new arguments and new methods of defence in order to cope effectively with the new situation, and to explain in an orthodox manner the problem which has been raised, or the doctrine which has been denied.

In every age of the Church heresies were regarded as of the greatest importance in bringing into relief the orthodox teaching. St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says : " There must be also heresies; that they also, who are approved, may be made manifest among you."[4] In this context, however, heresy has not the same meaning as we now attach to it. Here it means rather faction or

[4] I *Cor.*, 11-19.

party-spirit.[5] But the final clause is of most importance. The object of these factions will be to show who are the upright Christians. By the very fact that these latter take no part in the schisms, they show themselves to be true followers of Christ.[6]

Tertullian remarks that if it is necessary that there be heresies, it is also necessary that there be difficulties which occasion them.[7] Origen is more explicit on the beneficial sequels of heresy. " The opposition of detractors attacks the Catholic doctrine, so that our faith may not languish in sloth, but that it may be brightened by the struggle."[8] Though the words are different, the idea expressed is the same as that of St. Paul quoted above.

St. Augustine lays great emphasis on the influence of heretics. This is only to be expected, seeing that he has laid it down as a principle that God is so powerful that he can bring good from what is evil.[9] Treating specifically of heresies, he says : " The false opinion calls for the affirmation of the doctrine from the Catholic standpoint. . . . When the heretics have perturbed the Church of God, the truth hitherto covered with a veil is put in full daylight, and the divine will is made manifest.

" There are many capable of studying and establishing the truths of Scripture who remain silent and hidden, and do not take the trouble of solving difficult questions as long as there is no one to scoff at them. Was there any exposition of the Trinity really achieved before the Arians commenced their mouthings? Was the Catholic doctrine of penance fully explained prior to the attacks

[5] *Vid. Comm. on Ep. to Cor.* : Dr. McRory, p. 166.
[6] Dr. McRory: *Comm. loc. cit.* : cf. also II *Tim.*, 4, 3-4 : *Matt*, 18-7.
[7] *De Praescrip.*, chap. 39, P.L., 2, col. 53.
[8] *Hom. IX in Num.*, P.G., 12, col. 625.
[9] *Enchirid*, c. 11, P.L., 40, col. 236.

of the Novatians ? Did there exist an adequate treatment of Baptism until the time of the heresy of the Re-baptists? Had the theology of the unity of Christ attained its full development and perfection anterior to the schism which came to strengthen the weak? That was the time for those who had the means of discussing and solving these questions to reply to the arguments of the heretics and shed a clear light on the obscurities of dogma.[10]

" Many things pertaining to Catholic faith are examined with more diligence, understood with more clearness, and preached with more vehemence when being defended after the burning restlessness of heretics has denied them."[11]

In another passage, Augustine speaks of heresy as the gymnasium or training-ground of doctrine. During the course of heresies the truths of revelation are, so to speak, exercised, and hence have acquired a new strength when the heresies have passed.[12]

The precise influence of heresies in the development of doctrine is expressed by St. Thomas when he says that, though their one aim is to corrupt faith, nevertheless, they accidentally help to sustain it by necessitating a more exact examination of the Sacred Scriptures.[13] Hence heresies are not really causes of development, but occasions. Of themselves they contribute nothing positive to the progress of dogma; but rendering necessary a closer study of the disputed doctrine, they are in a certain sense responsible for its development.

Heresies may, therefore, be said to affect doctrinal

[10]*Enarrat. in Psalmos*, In Ps. 54, no. 22, P.L., 36, col. 648.

[11]*De Civit. Dei.*, Lib. 16, c. 2, n. 1, P.L., 41, col. 477; cf. *De Gen. contra Manich.*, 1, c. 1, n. 2, P.L., 34, coll. 173, 174.

[12]*Epistolar. Cl.* 3, *Ep.* 137 (al. 3), cap. 4, n. 16. " Haereses adversus nomen Christi . . . ad exercendam doctrinam sanctæ religionis . . . pullulant."

[13]*Summa* 2, 2. 11-3, ad. 2.

progress in three ways; they necessitate the establishment of a definite boundary between the true teaching and the false, they demand an investigation into the truths which have been wrongly interpreted, and, finally, the refutation of the heretical conclusions tends to the elucidation of the orthodox doctrines. In refuting a heresy it is not sufficient merely to prove that the heretical view is false. A refutation of this kind is of very little value. If the heresy is worth disproving there must have been some real difficulty, and the opinions put forward by the heretics must have had a certain limited foundation in fact. If, therefore, an adequate reply is to be made not only must the false theory be shown to be altogether foreign to the facts, but the true explanation must be forthcoming.

The enormous amount of patristic literature directed against contemporary heresies shows clearly how these movements were regarded by the orthodox teachers. Practically every Father and most of the ecclesiastical writers felt called upon to denounce the various heresies of the time. And while they fought against them they did not forget to insist on the traditional teaching, even though it may have been difficult to understand it. It is not to be imagined, that every doctrine which was disputed could be explained immediately. After all, it was certainly difficult for the early Fathers to essay a reasonable explanation of some of the dogmas of the Church; but, while that was so, they knew, at any rate, when a particular interpretation was not in harmony with the spirit of tradition. Their first aim was to disprove the false reasoning, and occasionally they were unable to do more. But as the Church spread, and more time could be given to the study of the doctrines, fuller replies were made to the heretics, and gradually

the true implications of the revealed doctrines were evolved.

Though it is true to say that heresies have no direct influence on the progress of doctrine, it is nevertheless a fact that the development of dogma may be traced down the centuries side by side with them. Furthermore, it will be found on examination that the weapons used to defend and develop the Catholic truths were generally those which had already been used by the opponents.

Section II.—The Influence of Heresies Illustrated in the Development of Christology.

In the early Church the chief attacks on her doctrines came from philosophers who wanted to make faith subject to reason. It does not matter for our purpose whether the attacks came from within the Church or from without. Naturally they came firstly from the pagans who sneered at the doctrines which they could not understand. This reacted on the faithful, so that in the infant Church, from the early years of the second century, we find some of the Apologists attempting to show that Christianity was in harmony with philosophy.[1] Their efforts in this direction were not wholly successful. Certain erroneous tendencies which later were used in defence of heretical teaching are traceable to these early writers, notably the tendency to subordinate the Logos to the Father. However, when we consider the peculiar circumstances in which these writers were placed, their incipient subordinationism is easily explicable. On the one hand, there was the God of Platonic philosophy, abstract Being, incomprehensible and incommunicable.

[1]For example, Justin Martyr, *flor.* 150 A.D. ; Tatian, *flor.*, 165 ; Athenagoras, *flor.*, 175 ; Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, pp. 49, 55, 58, 64; Tixeront, *Histoire des Dogmes* I, pp. 231 *et sqq.*

On the other was the absolute monotheism of the Jews. The Apologists must have been acquainted with both these ideas, and when, in addition, one remembers that the Christian doctrines had not yet been carefully examined, one is inclined rather to sympathise with these early theologians than to blame them. Regarding their Christology, it is quite clear that they were orthodox in their beliefs. They failed in the effort to explain what they believed. For instance, they realised that Christ was truly God and truly man, as is clearly seen from the fact that they were all familiar with the "communicatio idiomatum."[2] But, although Christ was God, He was also man ; but the Father also was God, and He was altogether spiritual. Was Christ God in the same sense in which the Father was God? If He was, how was the generation of the Son to be explained? These questions presented serious problems to the Apologists, and in their efforts to explain them they got very little help either from Scripture or tradition.

[2]Justin Martyr, I *Apol.* 23.2: 32.10: *Dial.*, 45-4, etc. Tatian speaks of the suffering God—*Oratio ad Graecos*, ch. 13.

It is necessary to explain what is meant by *communicatio idiomatum*. The term is a technical one, used to describe the ascription, in the concrete, of certain properties of the human nature to the divine, and those of the divine nature to the human. For example, things which are in the concrete proper to human nature may be referred to the Divine Person of Christ. The principle can be easily illustrated by examples. We can say, for instance, that God was born, or God slept, or God was crucified, because though these actions belong to the human nature, they were actions of the person, Christ, Who was both God and Man. Abstract properties may not be thus mutually interchanged. It is wrong, for example, to say that the Divine Nature became man, or that God became human nature. It is, however, true, to say that the Deity suffered, the reason being that though Deity, strictly speaking, refers to the Divine Nature, custom has made it synonymous with God.

As is evident from the examples given, this *communicatio idiomatum* is based on two principles, one a principle of philosophy, *viz.*, actions belong to the person, as distinct from the nature; the other a principle of theology, *viz.*, that in the person of Christ there are united two natures, the human and the divine.

It is not, therefore, surprising that they were to some extent influenced by current speculation with its logoi, demiurges, æons, and other intermediary beings.

These were some of the questions which the Church had to face when she had proved her right to live by refusing to be subdued either by sophism or by force, and had set herself up as a definite movement with definite means and a definite end. And owing to her rapid expansion, it became a matter of urgency to put forward her teaching—especially her teaching concerning Christ—in such a way that it would be understood alike by the learned and the simple. It seems strange that truths which were received with apparent ease by the unlettered found such difficulty in being admitted by the educated classes.[3] Of course, there were in the Church from its inception men well versed in knowledge; but, generally speaking, the philosophers of every age were hostile to the doctrines of revelation. We find this exemplified in the Acts of the Apostles in the passage describing St. Paul's reception by the philosophers of Athens.[4] He is called a babbler[5] at first, and at the end of his discourse some sneer at his doctrines and some politely dismiss him.[6] The same attitude towards Christianity is shown by Celsus, against whom Origen wrote what is pronounced to be the most perfect apologetic work of the primitive church.[7] The Arabian philosophers seem to have adopted a like hostility, as is evidenced by the peculiar

[3]Cf. Origen, *Contra Celsum.*, 3-12, P.G., 11, coll. 934, 935, where he says that when Christianity was embraced by many among the Greeks, who were devoted to literary pursuits, there necessarily arose heresies, not, however, as a result of faction or strife, but through the earnest desire of educated minds to become acquainted with the truths of Christianity.

[4]*Acts*, 17, 18-34.

[5]*V.* 18.

[6]*V.* 32.

[7]Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, p. 147.

interpolations which they inserted in the works of Aristotle. And the course of time shows no change. Modern Rationalists have practically the same to say about the Church and its doctrines as their fellows who listened to St. Paul. The real root of the antagonism in every period is found in the exaggerated emphasis laid on the powers of reason. The Church has always admitted the utility, in fact, the necessity, of a moderate rationalism in the development and elucidation of her doctrines. But reason and faith must go hand in hand. If the sense of the faithful is allowed free rein, the result is heresy, as we saw happened in the case of the Collyridians[8]; if reason claims supremacy over revelation, the logical consequence is the same. The legitimate procedure is found in the dictum of St. Augustine, " Believe that you may understand; understand that you may believe."

In the fight against extreme rationalism, the intellects of Christian scholars from the very dawn of Christianity were applied to the explanation of the revealed truths. It is impossible to expect the same measure of success from the early thinkers as from later theologians. The former had to map out the way, and naturally they often made mistakes. They could scarcely help being influenced by the imperfect philosophy current at the time, and, furthermore, the doctrines of Christianity presented genuine difficulties. It is, therefore, hardly fair to consider these early heresies simply as the work of the devil, as they were called by some of the Fathers. Undoubtedly Arianism was wrong, and so was Pelagianism, but at the same time there is something alluring about them. Take Arianism, for example ; it is the first reasoned attempt to explain the doctrine

[8]Epiph. *Haer.* 79, P.G., 42, coll. 739 *et sqq*

of the Trinity, it was much more comprehensive than any of the preceding heresies, and in a way included them all. But it was, at any rate, a vigorous attempt to explain a mystery.

Arius, however, was not by any means the first heretic. The heresy which bears his name is important because its conclusions were so acutely reasoned, and because it was so widespread. Arianism is only a stage in the speculation current during the patristic age. The modes of the divine existence had attracted the minds of scholars from the beginning. According to Clement of Alexandria, the Son existed with the Father from all eternity.[9] Origen emphasised the personal distinction between the Father and the Logos, and in his theory of eternal generation, he clearly implies the timeless existence of the latter. He was, however, unable to explain the divine unity otherwise than by subordinating the Son to the Father. Though divine, the Logos has for Origen only derivative being. He is God, but not in the same way as the Father is God; in fact, He is a second God.[10]

Following closely on Origen came the various anti-Trinitarian heresies. In order to safeguard the oneness of God, some thought it necessary to deny divinity to Christ; others held that there was only one Person in the Godhead, and identified Christ with this Person, and thus the Trinity became nothing more than three different manifestations of the single Person. This latter opinion was put forward in various forms. Praxeas, for example, held that the One God had become incarnate in Christ, which is Patripassianism in its crudest state.[11]

[9] *Stromata*, 5. 1:7. 3; Migne, P.L., 9, coll, 10, 422.
[10] *Contra Celsum*, 5-39; Migne, P.G., 11, col. 1,243.
[11] *Vid.* Tertullian *Adv. Praxeam*, 1, 2; Migne, P.L., 2, col. 156.

Nœtus contended that the Father by a change in His mode of being became His own Son,[12] alleging that the nature of God may combine in itself contrary modes of being.[13] Sabellius, in his turn, seems to have considered God not as a Trinity, but as a Quaternity. There was, firstly, the Monas, absolutely one; then from this single Monas the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were produced. But these three were only aspects or manifestations of the original and single Monas.[14] Paul of Samosata favours the strict unitarian view. The Logos is distinct from the Father, but is in no way God, having no proper subsistence apart from the Father. It is simply the Divine Reason. But this Divine Reason was communicated to the man Jesus in such a perfect way that the latter was deified.[15]

These varied theories regarding the Godhead were answered from the Catholic standpoint by numerous writers, although among these latter not a few show traces of subordinationism, *e.g.*, Tertullian and Hippolytus. Nevertheless they demonstrate the falsity of the heretical position, pointing out the inconsistencies of the erroneous views, and proving that these are not really supported by Scripture at all. Tertullian, incidentally, remarks that Praxeas uses a few texts of Scripture as if they were the whole Bible. Still these heresies and discussions contributed very little to the development of doctrine as far as explanation is concerned. They did contribute to this extent, that the teaching of the Church was more precisely expressed; Tertullian, for example, states some of the doctrines tersely and with remarkable

[12]Epiph., *Adv. Haer*, Lib. 2, Tom. 1-57; P.G., 41, coll. 995, 998, 999.
[13]Hippolytus, *Adv. Noet.*, 1, P.L., 10, col, 803.
[14]Athanasius, *Orat.*, 4-13; Migne, P.G., 26, col. 486.
[15]Epiphanius, *Haereses*, 65, 1-7; Migne, P.G., 42, coll. 14, 23.

accuracy. While the upholders of orthodoxy contented themselves with the simple refutation of the heresies and a statement of the traditional beliefs, they made no mistakes. But, as soon as they essayed an explanation of their own, subordinationism in some form or another comes into view.[16]

The second and third centuries witnessed a continuous stream of heresies relating to the Trinity. Individually these heresies were not of much importance. They did not affect the Church very seriously, being mostly local

[16] *Vid.* Otten, *History of Dogmas*,Vol. I, pp. 164, 165, 170, 201, 221; Tixeront, *Histoire des Dogmes* I, pp. 287, 301; note, p. 403.

While there seems to be no reasonable doubt that the second century writers were guilty of Subordinationism, it is well to note that on this question there is considerable difference of opinion amongst modern Catholic scholars. Nor is there unanimity even amongst non-Catholics. Harnack, for example, in his *History of Dogmas*, Eng. Trans. II, pp. 211, 256 *et seq*, 354 *et seq*, etc., altogether exaggerates the Subordinationist tendencies of the Apologists. His thesis being to prove that Jesus was deified by the Christian consciousness, he is eager to obtain from the Apologistic writings of the second century the greatest possible amount of support in proof of his contention, and he considers them " as recognising in Jesus a superior being, the Logos, who is not, however, consubstantial with God." On the other hand, Bull, in his *Defensio Fidei Nicænæ*, is inclined to explain away the passages which savour of Subordinationism.

Most Catholics, however, admit the heterodox or at least ambiguous statements of the Apologists. Besides the two referred to above, cf. D'Alès *Théologie de Tertullien*, pp. 86, 91, 95, 100, 101; *Théol. de S. Hippolyte* (pp. 28-31), who confesses that neither of these writers can be acquitted of the charge of Subordinationism.

The opposite view is taken by Father Murillo, S.J., in his work, *El Progreso en la Revelación Christiana*, in which he makes a spirited defence of the doctrine of the Apologists—refusing to admit their heterodoxy (*op. cit.*, pp. 265-284). Having given the arguments of the other side, he asks : " Son suficientes estos fundamentos para atribuir á los Padres antinicenos el subordinacianismo? " And he replies, " No lo creemos." Incidentally, on page 263 he says, " The author of the Theology of Tertullian . . . is surprised that Petavius would impute to *Tertullian* " the admission of two Words one impersonal and eternal, the other created and hypostatic." Both M. D'Alès and Petavius refer not to Tertullian, but to Theophilus (*vid. Théol. de Tert.*, p. 88; Petav., *Theol. Dogm.*, Vol. II; *De Trinit*, 1, 3-6).

and dying with their founders. At any rate, they were as nothing compared to that which shook the Church in the opening years of the fourth century. Arianism combined in itself the heterodoxy of the preceding generations. Its founders took from the Unitarians the absolute transcendence of God and the incommunicability of His essence, and followed Paul of Samosata in proposing the deification of the Logos, who was, essentially, a creature. Arius regarded the question thus : If the Logos is really God, then He must be equal to the Supreme Being; if, on the other hand, He is subordinate to the Father, then the Logos is not divine. It was a matter of choice between two opposites, and Arius chose the second hypothesis. He was logical enough to see that if subordinationism were admitted at all, it meant the destruction of Christ's divinity; but he was unable to see his way to defend the other alternative. His theory was worked up with much care; his conclusions were supported by arguments from the philosophy of Aristotle, and from those passages of Scripture which he was able to press into his service ; his views were popularized in poetic form, and altogether it must have looked at one time as if his movement was going to engulf the Church completely.

Arianism brought the Trinitarian controversies to a point where it was necessary for the Church to raise her voice authoritatively in stating the precise relation between the Father and the Son. It was proved beyond the possibility of doubt that if the divinity of the Logos was in any way subordinate to the divinity of the Father, the Logos simply ceased to be divine. He was merely human and might accidentally become deified, but true essential divinity He had none. This was the question which the Fathers of Nice were called upon to decide in

325 A.D. The multitude of erroneous opinions which had been published previously gave the Council one advantage, in making it patent that no unitarian or modalistic explanation of the Trinity was sufficient. Furthermore, the true divinity of the Logos had to be safeguarded, and therefore subordinationism was ruled out. After much discussion, the Fathers adopted the word " consubstantial," ὁμοούσιος, as the most suitable word to express precisely the relation between the Father and the Son. The Son was of the same substance as the Father, not of similar substance, but of the numerically identical substance. The terminology was not new. The same word had been used and abused by Sabellius. who employed it to prove his modalistic Trinity, and had been condemned by a Council of Antioch because of the manner in which it had been employed by Sabellius. It is, however, new in the sense in which it was used by the Council of Nice. For them it implied a real distinction of persons united in one substance. In other words, while in the Sabellian interpretation it emphasised the absolute unity of the Godhead, with Athanasius it implied both the unity of substance and the distinction of person, with equal emphasis on both aspects. The definition of Nice establishes the true divinity of Christ, His distinct personality, and His relation of identity to the Godhead.

The Catholic doctrine as defined by the Council of Nice was a distinct development of the traditional teaching. The same truths had always been believed, but they had not been so clearly explained. Hitherto there was a decided vagueness in the modes of expression and even in the concepts. As far as the divinity of Christ is concerned, this uncertainty is now removed. Questions regarding His creation or His

generation are definitely settled. He is truly God, not in any accidental way, but in essence, by having the same substance as the Father, to whom He is related in terms of strict equality.[17]

Although the Council of Nice defined the traditional doctrnes carefully and exactly, its definitions did not immediately end the controversy. In fact, the struggle became more bitter than before. The original Arian party had practically disappeared, at any rate, most of those who were opposed to Athanasius seem to have admitted the divinity of Christ. The post-Nicene contentions centred around the use of the word " consubstantial " and the relation which it implied. It was not that the controversy concerned the word as such. The trouble arose on account of the reality which was expressed by the word; that is, the participation of the Son in the numerical substance of the Father. Semi-Arians proposed other terms, some of them would admit that the Son was of a substance like to that of the Father—ὁμοιούσιος ; others took the opposite view, defending the opinion that He was not of a like substance —ἀνόμοιος ; others attempted to steer a middle course between the above theories, and held that the Son was like the Father—ὅμοιος. This last hypothesis was sufficiently vague to give enormous trouble. It could be twisted to mean practically anything, and for a time it threatened to triumph over the Nicene terminology. In many instances the homoian formulæ could be interpreted in a perfectly orthodox sense, but for the Semi-Arians they signified a subordination of the Logos just

[17]The consubstantiality of the Holy Ghost was defined by the Council of Constantinople against the Macedonians in 381. Macedonius considered the Holy Ghost precisely as Arius viewed the Son, insisting that the nature of the Holy Spirit was a created and not a divine nature.

the same as the formulæ proposed by the Anomeans or by the followers of Basil of Ancyra.

These post-Nicene disputes contributed little to the development of doctrine. At any rate, their contribution is not at all proportionate to the amount of labour expended. Incidentally they did occasion an examination of the doctrine regarding the Holy Ghost, but apart from that, most of the difficulties had been already settled, and it was rather a question of repeating the old arguments than of welding new ones.

The issue of the controversies both before and after the Council of Nice was to establish firmly the true divinity of the Son. His true place in the Trinity having been acknowledged, attention was turned to the human aspect of the Logos, for, according to Scripture and tradition, the Logos had become man. The same difficulty appeared here as had appeared previously regarding the Trinity. Christ as an historical person was one--He was at the same time human and divine. The question was raised immediately : How could divinity and humanity co-exist in the same person ? In reply, some postulated an imperfect humanity which was completed by the Logos, thus explaining the union by a kind of fusion; others admitted only a moral or accidental union, being over-anxious to defend the distinction between the terms united rather than the resultant union; others, again, held that the human nature was absorbed in the divine just as a drop of wine is absorbed in a quantity of water. Finally the true explanation was evolved, according to which Christ is truly God and truly man, the two natures being united in one Person, and each nature retaining all its proper perfections and activities.

The first to attempt to solve the Christological problem seems to have been one Apollinaris, a Bishop of Laodicea. From the refutations of his theory we can gather that he held that man was composed of three elements: the body, the soul, and the spirit. For Apollinaris, the soul was the principle of life and sensation, what modern psychologists would call the animal soul; the spirit was synonymous with mind; it was the principle of reason. Moreover, he held that two perfect beings could not unite to form one, and therefore either the divinity or the humanity was imperfect; but the divinity was perfect ; hence the humanity was in some way deficient. Furthermore, Christ was not capable of sinning, but He would be if He possessed a human will. Therefore, He had neither a human will nor the principle of which the will was a part, namely, the rational soul. Christ had two elements of humanity, but the third, the really important one was absent, being replaced by the Logos.[18]

There was not much difficulty in disproving the theory of Apollinaris. In essence it is merely a denial of the humanity of Christ, and it was easy to show from the Scriptures that the Redeemer had all the natural faculties of man. That contemporaries considered Apollinarism in this particular way is clear from the definition of the Council of Constantinople in which the theory was condemned. The conciliar decree had nothing to say of the union of natures at all. All that was defined in our subject was the true humanity of Christ. Yet this decision of the Council is important from the point of view of development. It safeguards the human nature of Christ. He is now truly divine and

[18] *Vid.* Jugie: *Nestorius et La Controverse Nestorienne* p. 2; Garrigou-Lagrange, *Le Sens Commune*, etc., p. 125.

truly human, and any attempt to explain the union must take account of these two facts.

The theory of Apollinaris, which concentrated attention on the unity of the Person of Christ, evoked a violent reaction, in which the distinction of natures was considered the matter of supreme importance. This distinction of natures was gradually exaggerated to such an extent that it was held that each nature terminated in a proper person, and hence that there were two persons in Christ, and that there were two Sons of God—the very conclusion, by the way, which Apollinaris mentioned and tried to avoid. The reaction ended in the heresy of Nestorius, who pushed the distinction of natures to its utmost exteme.[19]

According to Cyril of Alexandria, the heresy of Nestorius can be traced back to the opinions held by Diodorus of Tarsus in the fourth century.[20] These views were adopted by Theodore of Mopsuestia, a pupil of Diodorus. As set forth by Theodore, the theory seems to have borrowed some elements from the anti-Trinitarian teaching. It has, certainly, a strong resemblance to the doctrines propounded by Paul of Samosata in the preceding century. Theodore appears to favour the view that Christ became divine on account of the singular relations between Him and God. Everyone shares the divinity to a limited extent, but Christ participated in the divine indwelling to such a degree that He rises infinitely above all other men. But this divinity of Christ and His humanity do not unite to form one person, although the relations between them are of a most intimate kind; rather they are conjoined. He says : " The two natures are united

[19]Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, p. 242.
[20]cf. Tixeront *Histoire des Dogmes II*.9:

in one person, just as husband and wife are united in one flesh.[21]

Apart altogether from being heretical regarding the divinity of Our Lord, Theodore's explanation destroys the unity which he claims to defend. In his zeal to overcome Apollinarism, he insists too much on the distinction between the divinity and the humanity, so that he leaves himself no room for a single person as the term of the two natures. Furthermore, he admitted the " communicatio idiomatum " only in a very restricted sense. He would not say that the Son of God was born, or was crucified—such attributes could, indeed, be predicated of the human nature of Christ, but not of Him in whom divinity and humanity were conjoined. He thus anticipates Nestorius in holding that Mary was not the Mother of God, though she may be called the Mother of Christ.

Theodore's influence does not seem to have been extensive while he was alive, but his opinions were cast in more logical form by Nestorius. The latter continues the traditions of the school of Antioch in emphasizing the distinction between the natures. The divinity and the humanity are altogether distinct; between them there is only a moral union of the weakest kind. Theodore called the union a conjunction; with Nestorius it would be simply juxtaposition. The logical sequence is to hold a dual personality in Christ, and this Nestorius actually put forward. The opinion of Nestorius is absolutely opposed to Scripture, which in numerous passages teaches the oneness of Christ's person. Nestorius could not, of course, subscribe in any way to the " communicatio idiomatum." He took exception to the

[21]Theodore, *Fragmenta Dogmatica*, Migne, P.G., 66, coll. 982; Justinian Imperat., *Ep. adv. Theod.*, P.G., 86, coll. 1,064, 1074, Leontius Byz., *Adv. Incor. et Nest.*, 18, 30, 34, etc., P.G., 86, coll. 1,367, 1,371, 1,374, etc.

term θεοτόκος, or Mother of God, by which title the faithful venerated the Blessed Virgin. The fact that fthe word θεοτόκος became the watchword of orthodoxy during the period of the Nestorian heresy shows that devotion to Mary as the Mother of God was well known and popular. The rejoicing which was occasioned by the decree of Ephesus confirming the title,[22] is clear proof that the faithful understood the idea underlying the "communicatio idiomatum," and consequently the union of two natures in one person.

According to Nestorius, it was blasphemous to say that God was born. He would hold that only the human element of Christ was born of Mary. Cyril of Alexandria, who refuted Nestorius, points out that in the case of ordinary human beings, what is born of the mother is not the body or the soul, but the person. Strictly speaking, only the body comes from the mother, but, owing to its union with the body, the soul is born along with it. Similarly the Logos, being united with human nature, is born along with the human body, and hence Mary is rightly called the Mother of God because she is the mother of the person, and this person is at the same time Son of God and Son of Mary.[23] The relative positions of Cyril and Nestorius may be seen at a glance by comparing the twelve anathemas of the former with the twelve counter-anathemas of the latter. Cyril throughout emphasizes the oneness of Christ; with Nestorius the distinction between the natures is uppermost. Most of the counter-propositions of Nestorius are capable of an orthodox interpretation.[24] They are

[22]*Mansi Concilia*, 4, 1,042, 1,043; Cyril, *Epist.* 26; P.G., 77, col. 137.
[23]Cyril, *Epist. ad Monachos Aegpyti*, 1.4, 6.8, 9:18, 19; P.G., 77, coll. 10-39.
[24]Mansi, *Concilia* 4, 1,081 *et sqq*, Anathemas of Cyril; 1,099 *et sqq*; propositions of Nestorius.

heretical simply because he refused to interpret them thus, denying that divine and human actions could be indiscriminately predicated of the individual and historical Christ. The natures are so distinct that there is between them only the weakest connection. Theodore would favour at least a conjunction of natures; Nestorius does not seem to sanction more than a juxtaposition. The whole theory of Nestorius results in a denial of the unity of Christ's Person, and makes Him a dual personality, corresponding to the dual nature.

Cyril had interpreted the traditional teaching so faithfully that the Fathers of Ephesus declared his doctrine to be the faith of Nicea. The views of Nestorius were compared with those of Cyril, and with those of the earlier writers, and were found to conflict with the accepted teaching. He was thereupon condemned and deposed. The unicity of Christ's person was safeguarded and Mary was proclaimed the Mother of God.[25]

The Council of Ephesus marks another stage in the development of Christology. The Fathers of Nice had defined the equality of the Son with the Father: The Council of Constantinople defined the true humanity of Christ. Ephesus, in condemning Nestorianism, vindicated the Catholic doctrine of the unity of Person in Christ. The latter was truly God and truly man, but He was at the same time a single Person, and of this Person properties of either nature could be predicated. One might reasonably think that the Christological controversies were now at an end. In reality, however, they were scarcely half finished. They continued until the end of the eighth century, when, with the condemnation of Adoptionism, the doctrines concerning the nature and person of Christ were nearly as fully developed as they ever will be.

[25]Mansi, *op. cit.*, 1,211 *et sqq.*

The decision of Ephesus settled the doctrine regarding the natures and person of Christ, but it did not end Nestorianism. It must be remembered that this heresy was not simply the production of Nestorius. It was rather the logical outcome of the tendencies of the School of Antioch, of which Nestorius was a pupil. This school was famous for its literal interpretation of Scripture, and showed little love for the speculations which were then current. It seems to have regarded Scripture from a practical standpoint, and to have been adverse to reading into the inspired writings any meaning which the words would not warrant. This practical outlook tended to make the Antiochenes emphasize the distinction between the natures in Christ rather than emphasize the unity of person, for the Scriptures repeatedly referred to the two natures.

The School of Alexandria took a different view of doctrinal matters. Revelling in speculation, it interpreted the Scriptures not so much literally as allegorically, seeking to find a hidden meaning, deeper than that expressed by the words. The Alexandrians often pass over without comment the patent, historical meaning of a passage, and dilate on the mystical implications which the passage contains. And they did not restrict this esotericism to the interpretation of Scripture alone. We find this tendency in the Alexandrian School throughout the Christological controversies, and at no period is it more pronounced than after the Council of Ephesus. Nestorianism, whatever might be said against it otherwise, sought to defend and safeguard the true human nature of Christ. Now, the Alexandrians were more concerned with His divinity, which was concealed under the human nature. And just as the tendency of the Antiochenes finally resulted in resolving Christ into a

double personality, so the tendency of the Alexandrians resulted in a denial of His humanity and an affirmation of His unified nature. They regarded the natures as distinct in the abstract, but after their union in the Incarnation they seemed inclined to merge both natures into one. The humanity, while still existing, is somehow absorbed in the divinity, just as a drop of water is absorbed in a large quantity of wine, and Christ, while being consubstantial with God, is no longer of the same substance as ours.[26]

Needless to say, they must have hailed the decision of Ephesus as a triumph for them over the rival school, but under the leadership of Cyril their enthusiasm was prevented from overstepping the limits of orthodoxy. But scarcely had Cyril died when one of his followers came into conflict with the Church.[27] The fundamental idea of the theory of Eutyches is that Christ as man has not a human nature the same as other men. He does not inquire into the reason for his assertion, nor does he attempt to show how the human nature in Christ has been affected by the divinity. He confesses that there were two natures prior to their union in the Incarnation, but after the union he admits only one.[28] His theory is manifestly against the definition of the first Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.), in which the true humanity of Christ was proposed against the Apollinarists. Though Eutyches was condemned by the local Synod of Constantinople in 448 A.D., circumstances prevented his teaching being condemned by an Ecumenical Council until 451 A.D.

When such a Council was convened at Chalcedon it

[26]Tixeront III, 113.

[27]Cyril died in 444 A.D. (Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, p. 362) and, Eutyches was first condemned by a Synod of Constantinople in 448 A.D., Mansi, *Concilia* 6, col. 748. [28]Mansi, *Concilia* 6, 744.

had many serious questions to decide. The Nestorian party was giving much trouble; the orthodoxy of influential men was being called into question; charges of grave character had been made against Cyril, and finally there was this new heresy which denied to Christ a true human nature. In the Christological definitions issued by this Council there is evidently a marked development. Christ is one Person, and this same Person is truly God and truly man, the two natures being hypostatically united without mingling or confusion, so that each nature remains perfect and has its own proper activity; and although the activities are not absolutely independent of one another, each has, nevertheless, for its immediate principle the particular nature in in question. Furthermore, what is proper to the one nature may in the concrete be predicated of the other, because the two natures are united in one person.

In this brief summary of the teaching of Chalcedon, many aspects of Christology are manifested which were heretofore only implicit. The precise doctrine is the same, but in the terminology and concepts adopted by the Fathers of the Council there is a definiteness and precision which was hitherto lacking. The words, "substance," "nature," "person," "operation," etc., which were adopted from philosophy, contributed very much to the scientific accuracy and clearness of the definitions. The use of metaphysical language in setting forth the dogmas of the Church does not mean that the Church incorporated the doctrines from contemporary philosophy, as Harnack and others assert.[29] The Church took over

[29]Harnack, *History of Dogmas* I, pp. 17, 47, 127, 226, 227, etc.; Eng. Trans; Allen, *Continuity of Christian Thought*; Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas.*

the philosophical concepts in order to formulate her doctrine in a scientific manner. She never allows these concepts to determine her doctrine, but, on the contrary, she determines their meaning in the new sphere in which she applies them. As a matter of fact, in this particular instance the Church definitely transcended philosophy, and incidentally corrected it, by holding that a perfect human nature may exist without being terminated in a human person.

The adoption of philosophical terminology gave rise to serious inconveniences in the fifth and sixth centuries. While the early Fathers had made great efforts to fix the meaning of particular words, there still remained much confusion. The discussions which followed the Council of Chalcedon show that the terminology of its decrees was not universally accepted in the same sense. The same is true in regard to the language of Cyril. In fact, one of the primary causes of those subsequent controversies is the peculiar terminology of Cyril. There could be no doubt that Cyril was orthodox throughout. Yet in his explanation of the relation between the natures in Christ he was absolutely heretical if his words were taken in the sense accepted by the Antiochenes. Owing to the misunderstanding created by his expressions, Cyril was claimed by the Monophysites as the author of their teaching. They overlooked the sense obviously intended by Cyril, and devoted their attention to the literal meaning of the words. For example, "φυσις and ὑπόστασις, which the Cappadocians had already distinguished as "nature" and "person," were employed by Cyril as identical in meaning, signifying a concrete, individual, and independently existing nature, or simply a person as distinguished from nature. He hardly ever designated the human nature of Christ by φύσις only, but usually added

some qualification to show that the idea of personality was included. And hence when he says that after the Incarnation Christ is μία φύσις he does not mean that Christ has only one nature, but that he is only one person. And again, when he says that before the union there were δύο φύσεις and after the union only μία φύσις, he refers not to natures, but to persons, without, however, intending to imply that the human nature ever had a distinct personality of its own which was lost in the union."[30]

The Antiochene School "also identified φύσις and ὑπόστασις, but to signify nature, in opposition to πρόσωπον or person. Hence . . . when Cyril spoke of μία φύσις, his adversaries understood him to mean one nature, and when they defended δύο φύσεις in Christ, Cyril inferred that they meant two persons."[31]

It is clear from what has been said that misunderstandings were inevitable. The Alexandrians regarded as Nestorianism any attempt to make a distinction between the natures—the reason being that there was no word in their vocabulary which implied "nature" alone. But they did not immediately recognise the decisions of Chalcedon. Eutyches contented himself with confessing one nature in Christ after the Incarnation and denying that Christ had a true and complete human nature. His followers were not slow in proposing theories to explain how exactly the human nature in

[30]The Cappadocians took φύσις to mean nature and ὑπόστασις to mean person, just as the Council of Chalcedon had done; c.f Basil, *Ep.* 38-4, P.G., 32, col. 331; Greg. Naz. *Orat.* 40-41, P.G., 36, col. 418; Greg. Nyss. *Quod non sint tres Dii*, P.G., 45, coll. 118, 126.

[31]Otten, *History of Dogmas*, Vol. I, p. 409, c.f. Tixeront, *Histoire des Dogmes* III, pp. 51, 52 *et seq*; Jugie, *Nestorius et la Controv. Nest.*, pp. 174-190, in which will be found a learned and extensive treatment of the terminology of Cyril.

Christ differed from ours. According to some, His humanity was absorbed in the divinity; others held that the Logos was transformed into a human person. Thus the controversies continued without adding much to the amount of knowledge already possessed. The only real help they gave doctrinal development was in fixing the meaning of certain words, as, for instance, *φύσις*, *ὑπόστασις*, *πρόσωπον*, and when these were accepted in the precise sense of "nature," and "person" respectively—for the two latter words are practically synonymous—there was no difficulty in reconciling the decrees of the Council of Ephesus with those of the Council of Chalcedon.

While the Monophysite heresy was still raging, a new question began to be introduced. The object of this enquiry was to discover whether Christ could be said to have two wills or only one. From the unity of natures which the Monophysites defended the natural conclusion was that there was only one will, and hence this new theme may be considered simply as another phase of Monophysitism. Severus, the real founder of the latter heresy clearly adheres to the doctrine of the unity of will.[32] Leontius of Byzantium, one of the defenders of the orthodox faith, maintained rightly that there must be two wills in Christ, because He had two natures. It was not, however, until the question was taken up by Sergius of Constantinople that the problem became acute. Heretofore it was more or less an appanage of Monophysitism; with the advent of Sergius it became a matter of first importance, the reason being that Sergius admitted two natures, but condemned anyone who denied that "there was only one Christ and Son governing the divine and human activities by one single theandric

[32]Tixeront, *Histoire des Dogmes* III, p. 160.

operation."[33] The immediate end which Sergius had in view was to draw the Monophysites back to the Church, and, incidentally, to win them over to the service of the Emperor, who required their assistance in repelling the Arabs and Persians.[34] He was successful in restoring political harmony, but he failed utterly to effect a union between the Monophysites and the Church. Furthermore, the doctrines which he proposed were altogether foreign to the Christian faith. The Monophysites from the first regarded unity of energy or operation as merely another way of expressing unity of nature. Nevertheless, Sergius clung to his opinion, and strove to support it by every possible argument. The argument on which he seems to have relied most was that if two wills are postulated they are necessarily opposed to one another in a manner somewhat akin to the opposition of which St. Paul speaks.[35] By his specious reasoning, aided by equivocation and deceit, he persuaded Pope Honorius that his teaching was orthodox, and succeeded in escaping condemnation until the Council of Constantinople in 680 A.D.

The logical sequence of the theory propounded by Sergius is the denial of the true humanity of Christ. If the human nature has not a human will, then the nature either is defective—which is Apollinarism—or is somehow absorbed in the divine nature, which is the heresy of the Monophysites. The object of orthodox thinkers, therefore, was to establish the true conception of the humanity of Christ. Strictly speaking, the Monothelite heresy was adequately refuted by refuting Monophysitism, because, granting a perfect human nature, the existence

[33]Mansi, *Concilia*. II.: 564-568.
[34]Tixeront III, 161.
[35]Rom 7-18, 19, 23.

of a human will follows as a necessary consequence. Yet, for one reason or another, the struggle with the Monothelites was continued longer than the matter in question warranted. This was due partly to the vagueness of the expressions to which these heretics resorted, partly to the favour shown them by the Emperor, and partly to the fact that at this particular period most of the Popes did not live long enough to take a definite stand against the heretics and bring matters to a crisis. Pope John IV, it is true, condemned the doctrines of Sergius in 641 A.D., but no really effective measures were adopted until the time of Agatho, nearly forty years later.

Pope Agatho, in his dogmatic letter to the Emperor, outlines the true doctrine, viz., that, just as Christ had two natures, He had also two wills, as otherwise either one or other nature would be incomplete. These two wills are not opposed, they act in harmony. Agatho proves his teaching to be traditional by copious extracts from Scripture and the Fathers. He compares the teaching of the Monothelites with that of tradition, shows the falsity of the former, and ends by demanding that all subscribe to the doctrine which he has proposed. The Council of Constantinople, in its formal condemnation of Sergius and in its definition of the orthodox faith, practically repeated the words of Agatho's letter.[36]

Apart from Pope Agatho, the man who contributed most to the development and proof of the doctrine that Christ had two wills was St. Maximus the Confessor. He was a disciple of Leontius of Byzantium, and, like his master, he used the technical language of Aristotelian philosophy in his works in defence of religion. By his precise definitions and his logical method of proceeding

[36]Mansi, *Conc.* 11, coll 635 et *sqq* ; cf. *ibid*, coll 250-255.

from one aspect of a doctrine to another, he anticipates to some extent the methods of the Scholastics. He proves that free will is an essential part of human nature, and, therefore, if Christ had a real human nature, he must also have had free will.[37]

The Monothelite heresy cannot be said to have contributed much to the development of Christology, because the precise doctrine which it denied was already denied by the Monophysites. Similarly, the Adoptionist view propagated by Felix and Elipand in the eighth century in Spain occasioned very little real progress in the further elucidation of the doctrines relating to the person of Christ. Adoptionism, being scarcely more than a modified Nestorianism, was disproved by the same arguments which had been used against the latter heresy.[38] The error was condemned by various local Councils towards the end of the eighth century, and it lapsed altogether shortly after the death of its founders. The Council of Frankfort in 794 A.D. pointed out that the proper object of adoption is a person, not a nature, and

[37]Migne, P.G., 91, coll. 73 *et seq*; 301 *et seq.*

[38]The Adoptionists held that there were two Sons of God, one the Son by nature, the Logos; the other, the Son by adoption, the man, or the human nature. In other words, they considered that filiation ought to be attributed to the nature and not to the person. Though they pretended to maintain the unity of person in Christ, the whole tendency of the principles which they held is equivalent to a denial of this unity. Elipand certainly admitted the eternity of the Word, and the hypostatic union (*Epist.* 4-13, 14, P.L., 96, coll. 876, 877), but he nevertheless, seems to distinguish in Christ two distinct persons (*Epist.* 1-7, col. 863). He apparently held that the Word assumed not a human nature, but a human person (*Symbolum Fidei* 41, col. 917). Felix is more thoroughgoing. He reverts to the deification by grace, which was a feature of Nestorianism. The filiation of Christ differs from the adoption of all men only in degree (Alcuin, *Adv. Hæres. Felicis* 37, P.L., 101, col. 102). He is deified by grace, and is not " Deus verus," but " Deus nuncupativus " (Alcuin, *Adv. Fel. Libri.* 7, lib. 4-2, P.L., 101, col. 173). He concurs with Nestorius in refusing to admit the *communicatio idiomatum* (Agobardus, *Adv. Fel.* 36, P.L., 104, col. 61).

therefore to maintain that Christ as man is the adopted Son of God is equivalent to asserting that there are in Christ two distinct persons.[39] The unity of filiation which is implicit in the condemnation of Nestorius, is now made manifest by the Council of Frankfort.[40]

With the condemnation of Adoptionism the doctrines relating to Christ have reached the concluding stage in their development. We can trace the process of their evolution for seven centuries, from the time of Cerinthus and Marcion,—against whose tenets St. John and the early Apologists wrote strongly—to the time of Felix, Bishop of Urgel. The course of development is marked by the various heresies which occurred during the period. The heresies considered precisely as such did not contribute positively to the elucidation of doctrine, but by raising new questions and proposing heterodox replies they stimulated the faithful to investigate more closely the truths of revelation. The actual development of doctrine was brought about by the discussions to which the heretical teaching gave rise. In these discussions the doctrines were elucidated by the adoption of concepts from philosophy for the solution of various obscure problems, by the precision of language which was rendered necessary to combat the vagueness of the heretical proposition, by the reasonable interpretation of the Scriptures—so that no passage or text was given undue preference to others—and by the proper explanation of the writings of the Fathers, which aimed at discovering the precise idea a particular

[39]Mansi 13 coll. 876, 878 *et seq*; 890, 895 *et seq*.

[40]In the second century an obscure sect called the "Alogi" seem to have held views somewhat similar to those of Felix and Elipand. The chief promoter of this heresy was Theodotus, a currier of Byzantium. It was refuted by Hippolytus and Epiphanius, *vid*. D'Alès, *Théol. de S. Hippolyte*, pp. 104-109.

writer meant to convey in the actual words which he used to express himself. Finally, tradition as manifested in the Church's liturgy, and in the sense of the faithful, exerted no small influence on the progress of doctrine.

It would, however, be a mistake to infer that no doctrines were elucidated in the Patristic Age except those relating to the natures and person of Christ, or that heresies occasioned the development of no other doctrine. Their relation to Christology is taken as an example, because of the variety of aspects on which they successfully centred the attention of orthodox writers. Even during the Christological controversies other truths were brought into prominence by heretics. For example, while Arianism and Nestorianism were raging in the East, Western theologians were called upon to defend the faith against Pelagius and his followers. When Cyril was thundering against Nestorius, Augustine was quietly and effectively examining man's position in the world and his relation to God, and bringing into clear light the doctrines of free-will, grace, and original sin. In later times the error of Gallicanism gave rise to controversies which resulted in the definition of Papal Supremacy, and opened the way for the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, while Lutheranism necessitated the convocation of a General Council, and occasioned a decided development in the Catholic doctrines of justification, predestination, the teaching on the Sacraments, the redemptive value of the death of Christ, and, in general, of all those doctrines which are concerned with man's relation to his Last End. Again, the theories current at present among non-Catholics which attack the very foundations of belief and seek to overthrow the Catholic faith altogether, have called into being a series of apologetic manuals whose object is to show that Chris-

tianity and Catholicism are reasonable in every way, and to prove by modern arguments the truths of revelation. In fact, a cycle of development seems to have been completed. The methods now in use by Catholic scholars are the identical methods of the second-century Apologists, and the calumnies levelled at the Catholic Church to-day show a remarkable similarity to those which we find answered by the early Fathers.

CHAPTER X

The Inequalities of Development

THE history of dogmas shows, among other things, that progress did not continue in a uniform line during the life of the Church. There were certain periods during which doctrine developed very rapidly; others during which there was a certain amount of progress, and some when development is almost inappreciable. As has been said, the course of dogma exhibits two main characteristics: the tendency to conservatism and the tendency to progress. At certain stages of history these two are found in conjunction ; at other times conservatism alone is met with. There seems to be in every movement and in every science an inclination to retain what is already possessed and to refuse to accept anything new. The Catholic Church is pointed out as the standing example of conservatism. The charge is true, and no one will succeed in disproving it. But when opponents add that she is also the enemy of progress in every sphere, the whole accusation is falsified. She is no more hostile to progress than is any other institution civil or religious. Take any science, medicine, astronomy, geology; one can easily see that the same conservatism obtains in all. A new invention or a new theory is considered suspect simply because it is new. It is admitted to its proper place only when it has proved its worth. It is common knowledge that

George Stephenson was the laughing-stock of his brother-engineers when he was working at his locomotive. Similarly, Galileo was the butt of contemporary astronomers.[1] The only explanation of these and similar phenomena is that men are prejudiced against anything which is likely to effect a change in the established order.[2] And it may easily happen that conservatism will rule to such an extent as to countenance what has been proved false rather than allow one of its cherished principles to be removed.

This, then, being the attitude of secular movements, why upraid the Church for her conservatism? Her position is in no way different, except that she is absolutely certain of her principles. Hence she will not immediately approve of a theory advanced by any theologian, however learned he may be, and make it her own. Such theories are first subjected to a very critical examination. If they stand the test, and are shown to be in accordance with the doctrines entrusted to her care, she will freely admit that they contribute to the explanation of revealed truth. She is not, therefore, opposed to progress, even though she does at times adopt a conservative attitude.

There is no need to labour the question of conservatism. It will always exist both within the Church and without. Its existence may be taken for granted, and its presence is absolutely necessary. It acts as a governor to those who would wish to revolutionise doctrine, and ensures that development proceeds smoothly and legitimately.

[1]According to Lord Macaulay, " Even so great a man as Bacon rejected the theory of Galileo with scorn " ; Collected Essays, p. 550, London, 1916.

[2]Of course, there are always some individuals in opposition to established order. But, speaking generally, the conservative tendency is stronger.

The question of development is different. As already stated, there are some intervals during which greater progress is made than at others. Such intervals usually centre around heresies. If we examine the precise development of doctrine during one of these periods we see that the result is, for the most part, due to the efforts of a few men, sometimes to one individual. Against Arianism there was Athanasius ; against Nestorianism, Cyril. Pope Leo successfully countered the teaching of Eutyches, while Augustine and Prosper vindicated orthodoxy against Pelagius and Celestine.

Even a cursory glance at the works of some of these defenders of the faith shows that, in so far as they contributed to doctrinal progress, the result was due to their profound study of the doctrines concerned, combined with a certain originality of treatment. Their extensive knowledge and the peculiar individuality which they infused into their works, aroused in the faithful a keener appreciation of some aspect of Catholic truth. They improved on the teaching of their predecessors by making clear what was vague, by expressing what was hitherto only implied. In a word, they contributed to progress in the understanding of doctrine.

Progress is essentially a going onward. The idea of motion is very explicit. Development etymologically does not immediately suggest this notion, but rather implies it. And both words more naturally refer to continued movement in a particular direction rather than to the result of that movement. Leaving etymology aside, we may distinguish in progress two characteristics, originality and independence. A writer or a school adopts a new attitude and advances knowledge beyond the limit reached by predecessors. Of course, it will be objected that this is precisely the procedure of heretics,

and therefore heresies are developments of doctrine. To a certain extent they are, but they are not legitimate developments, and are, therefore, useless in themselves. Mere originality and independence do not constitute true progress; something else is required. True progress must proceed logically from the revealed deposit; it must go forward in a straight line, and not waver either to the right or to the left. Heresies certainly go forward; they show an advance on contemporary or on previous thought. But they do not proceed in a direct line from the revealed principles; they deviate to excess or to defect, and, as a result, their causal influence on legitimate development is nil. For true progress in doctrine originality must always be guided by the general principles of faith, and independence must never cut itself adrift from the teaching of revelation, however little regard it may have for the mere opinion of men.

The really important attribute of progress seems to centre around personal thought. If one has sufficient intelligence to think out questions for oneself, one's originality will quickly assert itself. While duly appreciating the labours of others, it is not necessary to take for granted everything they have said, every theory they may have proposed. All will recognise the necessity of accepting information on the authority of other men, but the knowledge so received is, or should be, a foundation for personal research. Roger Bacon[3] admits the importance of knowledge received from others, but, he says, that in itself it is of little value unless tested by experiment. "For example," he continues, "however much one may hear about the properties of fire, one will not adequately appreciate the object of one's knowledge

[3] *Opus Majus*, Lib. 1, part 1, chap. 3, pp. 4 *et sqq*, cf. pp. 445 *et sqq*; Edited by Jebb, London, 1733.

unless one actually sees fire in operation." The same is applicable in a modified way to the sphere of doctrine. It is, of course, impossible to make use of experiments, as is done in the natural sciences. But his contention is certainly true to this extent: that mere absorption of the ideas of another is of itself useless for progress in doctrinal matters. There is required, over and above, that personal interest in the matter under discussion which has the same relation to the revealed truths that experiment has to the physical sciences. One who is really interested in any doctrine and strives to examine it personally can go farther in its elucidation than one who merely accepts, and is content with, the explanations already given.

Furthermore, it may be noted that the greatest developments in doctrine often spring from very small beginnings. This principle is applicable to all development, false as well as true. Arianism, for example, may be traced back through Origen to the slightly Subordinationist tendencies of the early Apologists, and beyond them to the misinterpretation of certain texts in the Gospels and in St. Paul's writings. Or again take the multitude of sects into which Protestantism has been divided; all sprang from the operation of Luther's principle of private judgment, and the latter is partly due to the individualism inaugurated by the Renaissance movement. Coming to orthodox development—if we consider the particular question with which we are engaged, the Catholic theory of doctrinal development—we find it adumbrated by St. Vincent of Lerins in the fifth century, and he refers us back to certain passages in Scripture and to the teaching of his predecessors. Or take the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception—implicitly contained in the doctrine of the Divine Maternity, it may be traced

back to the Council of Ephesus, and even beyond it, for the belief in the Divine Motherhood of Mary is as old as the Church. Devotion to Mary must have been widespread from a very early date. Her sinlessness was universally believed. St. Augustine refused to discuss her status when he was dealing with sin, though from his definition of original sin he could hardly be expected to exempt her from the latter. Then the belief took a more definite shape in the Middle Ages, was to some extent negatively defined by the Council of Trent, and finally was solemnly promulgated by Pope Pius IX in 1854. Development in these cases was, therefore, neither sudden nor abrupt. There was not an immediate change from darkness to full daylight. Generally speaking, apart from the periods of heresy and of great individual genius, the development of doctrine was slow and gradual, but every step in the process contributed its share to the final *dénouement*.

Take away history, then, and the doctrines may remain, but suspended in mid-air. They are no longer pulsating with life and vigour, but are mere dry expressions of truth. Anyone who wants to see the doctrines of Catholicism really alive must go back through the course of their development. One may, indeed, obtain an excellent knowledge of the truths of revelation from any approved manual of Dogmatic Theology, but he can never see them as living realities until he becomes aware of the battles which were waged around practically every one of them. As presented in the Enchiridion of Denzinger, or in the Thesaurus of Cavallera, dogmas are, so to speak, fully grown. But as a collection they are not particularly interesting to anyone except to a theologian. In the writings of the Fathers, however, these same dogmas appear in an altogether different light.

To take an example. A certain amount of knowledge is conveyed when one is told that Christ had two natures united without confusion in one person. There is an added satisfaction when one proves the truth of this proposition from Scripture, and shows by the use of a certain amount of metaphysics that this is the only possible explanation which agrees with revealed truth. But all that knowledge is somehow incomplete unless one makes an excursion into the period of the Monophysites and sees the thrust and parry of the rival champions of the fifth and sixth centuries. The doctrine was then the object of a duel in which truth was pitted against falsehood. The writings contemporary with the struggle have a vivid freshness which simply cannot exist in the presentation of the same doctrine centuries later. The more modern treatment is clearer, is more connected, and better reasoned, but it lacks that peculiar force which marks the work of one who is defending the faith against a present heresy. How could we appreciate the ὁμόουσιος of Nice if we were ignorant of the views of Arius, or the θεοτόκος of Ephesus, did we not know that Nestorius had denied the divine Maternity of Mary? And the literature of the period shows that the Christological controversies were no mere "contests caused by the difference of a diphthong."[4]

It frequently happens, too, that history throws into relief many aspects of defined doctrines which might otherwise escape notice. An interesting example of the value of history in determining the force of a dogmatic

[4]Gibbon says: " . . . the profane of every age have derided the furious contests which the difference of a single diphthong excited between the Homoousians and the Homoiousians " : Decline and Fall, ch. 21 Vol. II, p. 352. Edited by Bury, London 1896. Gibbon's opinion is now discredited even by non-Catholics, cfr. Orr, Progress of Dogma, p. 109; Harnack, History of Dogmas (Eng. Trans), Vol. 4, p. 41.

definition may be found in the relation of the writings of Peter Olivi to the decree of the Council of Vienne in 1311. This Council defined that the rational soul was *per se* and essentially the form of the body. Theologians were at a loss to know the precise force of this definition until some of the writings of Olivi were discovered. These writings revealed the fact that he maintained that the rational soul was the form of the body mediately, namely, that it informed the body not directly by its own spiritual substance, but through the medium of the sensitive and vegetative souls.[5]

In tracing the history of any doctrine, one is necessarily brought into contact with the different mental outlooks which may be responsible for its greater or lesser development. A doctrine which may have remained untouched in one generation becomes the centre of interest in another. The teaching on the Sacraments, for example, cannot be said to have undergone any great development until the Scholastic period. Furthermore, while practically the same resources have been called upon at all times to assist in the simplification of the revealed truths, these resources are not always utilised in the same way. The attitude of Justin Martyr to philosophy is wholly different from that of Athanasius. While Justin seems inclined to regard Platonic speculation as a kind of modified revelation, Athanasius is under no such delusion. He sets himself definitely against one of the most cherished tenets of Platonism, viz., that man being material, can never come into contact with God. Arius had pushed Platonism to its extreme; Athanasius upheld the superiority of the Gospel truth—showing that,

[5] *Vid.* Beraza, *De Deo Creante*, *pp.* 638-650, especially 644; Tanquerey, *Syn. Theol. Dogmat.*, Vol. II, p. 513; Cavallera, *Thes. Doct. Cath.*, n. 651, p. 339.

although philosophy is a useful instrument in the elucidation of doctrine, its conclusions, if contrary to the revealed teaching, must be unhesitatingly cast aside.

Augustine, throughout his life, strove to attain a reasoned faith. He did not seem to care very much whether the means was Platonism or Aristotelianism; he took what was best suited to his purpose. He was satisfied if he could show that his beliefs could be defended by reason apart from any single system of philosophy. The ideal towards which Augustine was striving was attained only in the Middle Ages, when the Scholastics, using the philosophy of Greece, showed that every truth of Christianity was in harmony with the principles of reason.

CHAPTER XI

Retarded Development.—Its Causes

THE history of dogmas shows that the line of development is not continuous. There are periods of progress and periods of comparative stagnation. The energy which in one age was directed to the explanation of the revealed truths was in another used either in conserving and stabilizing the results of the previous generations, or devoted to matters which had little or no relation to doctrinal progress.

How is the existence of these periods of stagnation to be explained? Clearly, they are not accidental occurrences, since they are so frequently met with. Take, for example, the time between the sixth and the eleventh centuries. During that whole period doctrinal development is practically at a standstill. The history of those centuries shows that circumstances were adverse to any quiet study of revelation. Rome had been overthrown by the Northern tribesmen in the latter half of the fifth century. The Church in Africa was practically destroyed by the Arian Vandals, who invaded it shortly after the death of Augustine. Spain fell before the Goths, and was later overrun by the followers of Mohammed. The whole face of Europe was changed, and a new work had to be undertaken by the Church —the conversion of the pagan conquerors. This task completed, the Holy Roman Empire came into being,

and during a short interval of peace in the time of Charlemagne, an attempt was made to establish schools and to remedy abuses which had crept into the Church. Had the successors of Charlemagne been endowed with his intelligence and his faith, the union between Church and State might have had still happier results. But the Empire was of short duration. Warring factions struggled for the imperial authority. The Church was compelled, willingly or unwillingly, to take part in these political disputes. Interested parties strove to introduce their adherents into vacant bishoprics, and even into the See of Rome itself. The result was that no thought was given to anything like development of doctrine. Those who did honestly bestow their talents on religious matters found that all their energy was required to conserve what had already been attained.

Again, the introduction of the Feudal System led to the further enslavement of the Church. While theoretically much can be said in favour of Feudalism, in practice it resulted in the appointment of bishops and abbots who were totally unfit for their office. The nomination of these being in the hands of the civil rulers, abuses were inevitable. The freedom of the Church was restricted to such an extent that frequent efforts were made to use her as an instrument of the State. And for purposes of doctrinal development the Church must be free in the election of her officers and independent of the State in carrying out those duties committed to her charge. With the election of Hildebrande to the Papal Chair, the tide slowly turned. Gradually the Church regained her independence, and with it began the Scholastic movement, which brought about a development of doctrine partially, if not wholly, compensating for the comparative stagnation of the immediately preceding centuries.

It may be remarked in passing that the interference of the State in doctrinal matters seldom or never contributed to doctrinal progress. The attitude of several of the Emperors of Byzantium to Arianism led to the prolongation of that heresy. Similarly, the *bona fide* interference of Justinian resulted in embittering the Monophysite party at a time when feeling already ran high. Again the interested intervention of Heraclius in the reconciliation of the Monophysites resulted in a new aberration—the Monothelite, which, though essentially a political device, contained just sufficient doctrinal errors to classify it as a distinct heresy. It will be noted that with the intervention of civil authority the doctrinal aspect of the controversy is forgotten by the heretics. The dispute becomes a question of politics, and the one thought of the heretics is how best to encompass the downfall of their orthodox opponents. As examples of this, it will be sufficient to refer to the chequered lives of Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria, Pope Martin I, and Maximus the Confessor.[1]

But to return to the special period with which we are dealing—that from the fifth to the eleventh century—what, in summary, were the causes that led to the stagnation of doctrine during this time? Firstly, there were too many other matters to claim attention; secondly, there was comparatively little doctrinal opposition; and thirdly, the truths of revelation had been so ably discussed by the Fathers that it seemed impossible to improve on their exposition.

Regarding the first point, enough has been already said to show that the devastating wars and the extensive missionary campaigns among the unlettered conquerors

[1]Alzog., Universal Church History, Vol. 1, pp. 370, 420, 446-448, Eng. Trans., Dublin, 1879.

of Southern Europe resulted in turning men's attention from the study of doctrine which was such an outstanding feature of the Church during the first five centuries.

These same causes may be taken as explaining why no really great heresy arose during the period. Adoptionism was not widespread, nor did it exhibit any great originality. Yet the steps taken to settle it show that the Church was still watching the deposit entrusted to her care, while the writings of Paulinus, Alcuin and Agobard, in defence of the faith, prove that the study of the revealed doctrines was by no means neglected.[2]

Again, the Iconoclastic controversy, which lasted practically throughout the eighth century, can scarcely be considered as having sprung from a doctrinal source. Its origin is to be found in the Mohammedan and Jewish hatred for images, and its propagation in the Eastern Church was the work of discontented Bishops,[3] and ignorant Emperors. And, notwithstanding the fact that it sprang from religious bigotry, and that it relied for its success more on physical force than on argument, it occasioned the treatises of St. John Damascene, wherein may be found a lucid explanation of the whole doctrine of the veneration of images—an explanation to which subsequent scholars have had little to add.[4]

Yet another cause of stagnation remains to be explained, viz., the fact that no one wished to differ even from the speculative opinions of the Fathers, especially from those of Augustine. Indeed, the principal cause of deterioration

[2]Migne, P.L., 96 *et sqq.*
[3]Alzog., *op. cit.*, Vol. II. pp. 150 *et sqq.*
[4]Migne, P.G., 94, coll. 1,231-1,420.
St. John Damascene is the last theologian of the Eastern Church, and is by far the most important figure in the later Patristic period. The Western Church produced no thinker of equal merit during that epoch, and we have already given some reasons for this phenomenon.

in doctrinal exposition may be traced to psychological motives, to the inclination to follow the line of least resistance, and to the tendency to accept everything proposed by authority, even in details in which that authority is unworthy of credence.

Regarding this misplaced veneration for authority, it is of interest to note what Friar Roger Bacon says on the subject. Treating of the obstacles which prevent one from attaining truth, he says these may be grouped under four heads: insufficient authority, custom, common opinion, and ignorance masquerading as wisdom.[5] These four causes, he continues, militate against the progress of every branch of knowledge, the reason being that they act as a barrier to personal thought. As regards authority, only that which is undeserving of the name is included. The authority of the Church or of Scripture, or of those scholars whose conclusions have been independently confirmed, are not to be considered as obstacles to progress.[6]

It may be claimed, of course, that if one is free to accept or reject at will the opinions of scholars of past ages a state of mind is reached which is practically identical with Luther's theory of private judgment. Such a charge is manifestly untrue. First of all, by the labours of earlier writers certainty was achieved on some matters, and in

[5]Quatuor sunt maxima comprehendendæ veritatis offendicula, quæ omnem quemcumque sapientem impediunt, et vix aliquem permittunt ad verum titulum sapientiæ venire, *viz.*, fragilis et indignæ auctoritatis exemplum, consuetudinis diuturnitas, vulgi sensus imperiti, et propriæ ignorantiæ occultatio cum ostentatione sapientiæ apparentis . . .Nam quilibet in singulis artibus vitæ et studii et omnis negotii tribus pessimis ad eamdem conclusionem utitur argumentis, scil., hoc exemplificatum est per maiores, hoc consuetum est, hoc vulgatum est, ergo tenendum. *Opus Majus*, part 1, chap. 1, pp. 2 *et seq.*

[6]Bacon is careful to make this proviso, *op. cit*, p. 3.

such cases their authority is neither weak nor unworthy ; secondly, the Lutheran principle is wrong because Luther extended it to everything—private judgment was superior to the definitions of the Catholic Church, and to the conclusions of any other individual; it was applicable to necessary truths as well as to mere opinions. Now, it is the teaching of the Catholic Church that while in necessary matters there must be unity, in doubtful matters freedom of opinion is admitted. Hence, even Catholics are justified in following the principle of personal judgment to a certain extent. After all, development of doctrine can be said to have its origin in personal thought aided by grace. Progress in doctrine, like progress in any science or art, is proportionate to the amount of intelligence brought to bear on its manifold implications.

But if an individual has advanced the process of development to a degree far beyond his contemporaries, his activities are apt to discourage great exertion in those who come after him. The period with which we are dealing may be said to commence with Augustine. He had covered practically the whole field of Catholic doctrine. He had explained many problems much better than his predecessors, and in certain cases had treated of aspects of revealed teaching which hitherto had remained practically untouched. His authority in the succeeding centuries was enormous. Even when making allowance for the reaction which occurred towards the end of his life, and which manifested itself in Semi-Pelagianism, it must be said that the comparative stagnation during the next five or six centuries is ultimately traceable to the abuse of his influence. It was forgotten that many of his opinions were put forward as working hypotheses, that some of his statements might demand

closer examination, that in certain cases he might possibly have erred, as he himself admitted; all such possibilities were passed over, "hoc exemplificatum est per maiores, ergo, tenendum."

In dealing with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, we saw how stubbornly Augustine's theory of original sin held its ground. Even the master mind of St. Thomas refused to deny it altogether, although he must have seen that the opinion was untenable. And since this is the case with St. Thomas, how must it have been in the preceding centuries when the only explanations of Catholic doctrine were to be found in the " Catenæ " of passages from Scripture and the Fathers?[7] It is right and proper to respect the theologians of old in so far as they have contributed to the development of doctrine of theology. All honour to Athanasius and Augustine and Leo for their brilliant explanations of revealed truth, but there is no reason for attributing to antiquity a monopoly of truth or a monopoly of intellect, and it seems that the scholars of the period with which we are dealing did both.

Nor is this excessive reverence for the masters of the past restricted to that particular period. It is found in a greater or less degree in every age, and progress is retarded more or less accordingly. In the Scholastic period every theologian of repute wrote a commentary on the sentences of Peter Lombard, and since the time of the Scholastics, theological energy—that is, in the sphere of dogma—has been largely devoted to the

[7]These " Catenæ " were of three kinds, exegetical, dogmatic, and homiletic. From the historical point of view, they are of immense importance, because they embody passages from numerous works now lost. But seeing that they usually give merely a collection of opinions, their importance in doctrinal development was not considerable. *Vid. Cath. Encycl.*, Vol. III, p. 434, Art. Catenæ.

annotation of the Summa of St. Thomas. While these labours are most useful and even indispensable in the matter of instruction, and while they may have resulted in a development of theology, they are to a great extent barren as regards doctrinal progress. The past had its doctrinal problems and attempted to solve them. Other problems have arisen since, and some of them confront the present generation. But they will not be solved by following the letter of the scholars of old. It is the spirit of these men that ought to be the guiding star in further research. St. Thomas, for example, did not depend altogether on authority. He adopted new lines of argument to cope with the new questions. He allowed his originality free play, as is well exemplified by one of his biographers—William of Tocco—who, speaking of the method of St. Thomas, uses the word "new" no less than eight times in one sentence.[8]

Present-day problems must be tackled and solved in a manner suitable to modern requirements. Difficulties of a somewhat similar nature may have occurred in the past, and the method by which they were then overcome may give a certain amount of light as to how they should now be answered. But it may happen that there is no precedent, and then contemporary theologians must face the question for themselves, otherwise there can be no development. The Greek Church refused to adopt the conclusions of Augustine; it scorned the problems which Western genius had proposed, and answered.

[8] "Erat enim *novos* in sua lectione movens articulos, *novum* modum et clarum determinandi inveniens, et *novas* reducens in determinationibus rationes; ut nemo, qui ipsum audisset *nova* docere, et *novis* rationibus dubia definire, dubitaret, quod eum Deus *novi* luminis radiis illustrasset, qui statim tam certe cœpisset esse iudicii, ut non dubitaret *novas* opiniones docere, et scribere, quas Deus dignatus esset *noviter* inspirare." Vita *S. Thomæ*, auctore Guilielmo de Thoco, cap. 3, n. 15, E; *Acta Sanctorum*, Vol. 6, p. 663.

The result was that its conservatism led to petrifaction. Breaking away from the parent stem during a period of theological decadence, it lacked the vigour to take its place in the field later when a new civilisation was working energetically to advance the progress of doctrines.

The stagnation of doctrine in the Greek Church is surely due, ir part, to the exaggerated respect for the early Fathers of their own race. As a Church it ceased to be catholic and became local. Hence it scarcely ever came into contact with a foreign mentality. It assimilated nothing, had no opportunity to develop its teaching, and even though it had, it would not have profited by such an opportunity. Authority and custom were its doctrinal rulers.

As a cause of doctrinal stagnation, custom must be given a place. But it is so closely allied to authority that there is no necessity to discuss it here. Regarding the unwarranted assumption of knowledge which Friar Bacon mentions as a cause of ignorance, much might be said. At all times failure to approach a problem openly and straightforwardly is adverse to progress in knowledge. There is no advantage in shirking the issue and using verbiage to cover up the difficulty. To admit ignorance may be humiliating, but it has, at least, the merit of candour. The other method has nothing to recommend it; it is a sign of decadence in intellectual activity.

And there have been times in the history of the Church when this so-called knowledge flourished. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries may be cited as exemplifying its use and its results. Although the immediate heirs to all the intellectual riches of the preceding century, writers of this period failed to put that wealth to profit. The genius of Scholasticism had almost disappeared at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and with it personal

thought and intellectual independence ceased also. The originality displayed by the great Scholastics in their attempts to solve the various problems which confronted them gave place to a lack of interest in nearly all branches of knowledge. Writers were content to accept the opinions of predecessors and they made no effort to discover anything new. In their explanations of difficulties they made use of logic and dialectics to such an extent as to cloud the issue completely. These two sciences which the earlier masters had employed with such telling effect were now used not as a means, but as an end. Syllogisms, distinctions, and counter-distinctions served rather as a cloak for ignorance than as a vehicle for the conveyance of genuine knowledge. And although the teachers of the time considered themselves competent to discuss any subject, they do not seem to have taken the trouble of studying their subject beforehand. At any rate, that is the opinion given by a contemporary writer, Richard de Bury. The professorial chairs, he says, are occupied by mere youths, who, without sufficient training, claim to lecture on the philosophy of Aristotle.[9]

Such being the state of affairs during this period, it is little wonder that it produced no man of genius. Absence of personal interest in intellectual pursuits, over-confidence in the opinions of predecessors, a

[9]Tyrones scholastici soliditatem doctrine, quam veteres habuerunt, tam paucis lucubratiunculis non attingunt, quantum[cum]que fungantur honoribus, censeantur nominibus, auctorizentur habitibus, locenturque solemniter in cathedris seniorum . . . Categorias, Perihermenias, in cuius scriptura summus Aristoteles calamum in corde tinxisse confingitur, infantili balbutiæ resonant impuberes et imberbes.. . . Insolvunt sententias sermonibus imperitis, et omnis logice proprietate privantur, nisi quod Anglicanas subtilitates quibus palam detrahunt, vigiliis furtivis addiscunt : Ricardus de Bury, *Philobiblon*, anno 1344, quoted in Denifle, *Chartul. Univ. Paris*, Vol. 2, p. VIII.

Vid. also Alzog, *Univ. Ch. Hist.*, Vol. 3. pp. 124 *et seq*, Eng. Trans., pp. 431 *et seq.*

formalism under which ignorance was made to appear as knowledge, all these qualities are apparent in the late Scholastic period. They contributed to the decay of Scholasticism, made impossible any progress in knowledge; and in the sphere of doctrine, instead of furthering its development, they must be regarded as responsible —at least indirectly—for the theories of Luther.

CONCLUSION

THOUGH the revelation made by God is infinite in its implications, and though the development of doctrine will continue as long as there is intellect in the world, it is, nevertheless, true that in this branch of knowledge, as in every other, we must be prepared to accept the law of diminishing returns. In its course through nineteen centuries the revealed deposit has reached a certain stage of development, but that development is still far from perfection. Every stage of development restricts the originality of succeeding generations. We of the twentieth century cannot begin as if Athanasius or Augustine or Aquinas had never existed. Others have laid the foundations; they have partly built the structure; our duty is to continue the building and to ornament what has been built. The architects of old show us what can be done if the intellect is properly directed to the work, and of this work a vast amount still remains to be done, and every generation is called upon to do its share. Our predecessors have pointed out the way, but they could proceed only a short distance. We enter upon their labours, and, if animated by their spirit, we are certain to make progress.

Progress is the watchword of the present century, progress in thought, progress in science, progress in art. The nineteenth century was practically sterile as regards doctrinal development. It is true that a few doc-

trines were defined, but beyond the definition, the century contributed little to their development. Yet the last century has laid the foundations of movements which will in due time effect a development of doctrine. In the matter of exegesis the methods of non-Catholics necessitated a more extensive use of the auxiliary sciences of history and archæology; in Apologetics the arguments advanced against Christianity by materialistic philosophers called for new defences of the revealed teaching; while in the sphere of Dogmatic Theology, the use of the historical method and the revival of the genuine spirit of Scholastic philosophy give promise of great future progress. If the instinct for doctrinal development has ever had a stimulus it is in our age, and the example of experts in the physical sciences is an adequate commentary on the absolute necessity of personal thought and original research in the matter of progress. And, as far as progress in doctrine is concerned, history repeatedly shows that the ultimate law of development consists in the need of applying the old truths to answer the new questions.

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O'DOHERTY, EUGENE
AUTHOR
Doctrinal Progress and Its Laws
TITLE

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	ROOM NUMBER
	Sprague	JAN 12
		NOV 6
	Kavanagh	APR 2
		MAY 15
	Brown	SEP 2
	Ford	JA
	Cercora	
	Egan	
	STORA	

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